

Knowledge

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Achieve Noble Character

Knowledge

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Compiler's Notes

We have tried diligently to do justice in this volume however if there are any short falls found then the compiler is personally and solely responsible for them.

We accept the possibility of faults and shortcomings in an effort to complete such a difficult task. We might have unconsciously stumbled and committed errors for which we ask for indulgence and forgiveness of our readers and the drawing of our attention thereto will be appreciated. We earnestly invite constructive suggestions which can be made to ShaykhPod.Books@gmail.com.

Introduction

The following short book discusses an Aspect of Noble Character: Knowledge.

Implementing the lessons discussed will aid a Muslim to Achieve Noble Character. According to the Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2003, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has advised that the heaviest thing in the Scales of Judgment Day will be Noble Character. It is one of the qualities of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, which Allah, the Exalted, complimented in Chapter 68 Al Qalam, Verse 4 of the Holy Quran:

“And indeed, you are of a great moral character.”

Therefore, it is a duty on all Muslims to gain and act on the teachings of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in order to Achieve Noble Character.

KNOWLEDGE

Knowledge - 1

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6853, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that whoever follows a path seeking knowledge Allah, the Exalted, will make the path to Paradise easy for them.

This indicates both a physical path someone takes seeking knowledge, such as attending lectures and classes, and a path whereby someone seeks knowledge without a physical journey. It encompasses all forms of knowledge, such as listening, reading, studying and writing about knowledge. The path to Paradise has many obstacles preventing a muslim from reaching it. Only the one who possesses knowledge of them and how to overcome them will reach Paradise safely. In addition, it is easily understood that a person cannot reach a city in this world without knowledge of its location and the route which leads to it. Similarly, Paradise cannot be obtained without knowing these things about it, such as the path leading to it. The knowledge mentioned includes useful worldly knowledge as well as religious knowledge, as the former often aids one to remain sincerely obedient to Allah, the Exalted. For example, the one who seeks useful worldly knowledge in order to obtain a lawful occupation will find it easier to avoid earning unlawful wealth. This attitude will aid them in their journey towards Paradise.

In addition, the path of Paradise is only journeyed by those who adopt piety. This involves fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions, facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. The root of piety is therefore gaining and acting on religious knowledge. Chapter 35 Fatir, verse 28:

"...Only those fear Allāh, from among His servants, who have knowledge..."

But the important thing to note is that a muslim's intention to seek and act on knowledge must be to please Allah, the Exalted. Whoever seeks religious knowledge for a worldly reason, such as showing off, has been warned of Hell, if they fail to sincerely repent. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 253.

In addition, a muslim must strive to act on their knowledge as knowledge without action is of no value or benefit. This is like the one who possesses knowledge of a path to safety but does not take it and instead remains in an area full of dangers. This is why knowledge can be split into two categories. The first is when one acts on their knowledge, which leads to piety and an increase in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted. The second is when one fails to act on their knowledge. This type will not increase one's obedience to Allah, the Exalted, in fact, it will only increase them in arrogance believing they are superior to others even though they are like

donkeys which carry books that do not benefit it. Chapter 62 Al Jumu'ah, verse 5:

“...and then did not take it on (did not act on their knowledge) is like that of a donkey who carries volumes [of books]...”

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion are the blessings obtained by a group of muslims who study and recite the Holy Quran in a Mosque. Namely, tranquillity and mercy will descend upon them, the Angels will surround them and Allah, the Exalted, will mention them to the Heavenly Angels.

This indicates the virtue of learning and studying the Holy Quran. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has declared in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 5027, that the best person is the one who learns the Holy Quran and teaches it to others. It is important to note, this includes acting on the teachings of the Holy Quran. This group of people are so special that Allah, the Exalted, will even forgive the person who unintentionally joins them. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6408. It is hoped that those who perform this deed regularly will be granted the gifts mentioned earlier namely, tranquility and the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, throughout their day. Whoever receives these blessings will find peace and ease in all aspects of their life and when they encounter a difficulty these gifts will safely guide them through it.

It is hoped that whoever receives the company of the Angels in this world will be granted their company at the time of their death and in the hereafter. Chapter 41 Fussilat, verse 31:

“We [angels] were your allies in worldly life and [are so] in the Hereafter...”

Knowledge - 2

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2645, that when Allah, the Exalted, desires to give someone good, He provides them with Islamic knowledge.

There is no doubt that every muslim irrespective of the strength of their faith desires good in both worlds. Even though many muslims incorrectly believe that the good they desire lies in fame, wealth, authority, companionship and their career, this Hadith makes it crystal clear that true lasting good lies in gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge. It is important to note, a branch of religious knowledge is useful worldly knowledge whereby one earns lawful provision in order to fulfil their necessities and the necessities of their dependents. Even though the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has pointed out where good lies yet it is a shame how many muslims do not place much value in this. They, in most cases, only strive to obtain the bare minimum of Islamic knowledge in order to fulfil their obligatory duties and fail to acquire and act on more, such as the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Instead they dedicate their efforts to worldly things, believing true good is found there. Many muslims fail to appreciate that the righteous predecessors had to journey for weeks on end just to learn a single verse or Hadith of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, whereas today, one can study Islamic teachings without leaving their home. Yet, many fail to make use of this blessing given to the modern day muslims. Out of His infinite mercy Allah, the Exalted, through his Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be

upon him, has not only pointed out where true good lies but He has also placed this good at one's finger tips.

A Muslim must not be fooled into believing that Islamic knowledge only explains how to perform rituals and what is unlawful and lawful. In reality, it teaches people how to adopt the correct attitude and behaviour so that they use all the worldly blessings they have been granted correctly so that they benefit themselves and others in both worlds thereby achieving peace of mind and success in both worlds. The only One who can teach this to mankind is the One who created and knows all things namely, Allah, the Exalted. Therefore, prioritising gaining and acting on worldly knowledge over religious knowledge is not wise.

Allah, the Exalted, has informed mankind of where an eternal buried treasure is located which can solve all the problems they may encounter in both worlds. But muslims will only obtain this good once they struggle to acquire and act on it. This in turn will lead to peace and success in both worlds. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

Knowledge - 3

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 3257, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned against asking too many questions, as this led to the destruction of the past nations. Muslims should instead do what they have been commanded, according to their capacity, and refrain from what they have been prohibited from.

Muslims should not adopt this mentality as people who have a habit of asking too many questions often fail in fulfilling their duties and from acquiring beneficial knowledge, as they are too busy asking and researching about less important and sometimes irrelevant information. This mentality can inspire a person to argue and debate over these types of issues also. Unfortunately, this attitude is quite widespread amongst muslims today, as they often argue about non obligatory and less important issues, instead of concentrating on fulfilling their obligatory duties and the established traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, correctly, meaning, fulfilling them with their full etiquettes and conditions.

A muslim should instead research and query about topics which are relevant and important to understand for both worldly and religious matters otherwise they will follow in the footsteps of the people mentioned in this Hadith and only make their own lives more difficult. In respect to one's faith, relevance is determined by deciding whether learning something will increase their sincere obedience to Allah, the Exalted. If it will not, then

they should not waste their time researching and learning this piece of knowledge. In respect to one's worldly life, relevance is determined by deciding whether learning something will help one fulfill their worldly duties, such as their duties at work. If it will not, then they should not waste their time researching and learning this piece of knowledge.

Finally, one must ensure they avoid the mentality mentioned in the main Hadith, especially, when they study Islamic teachings, as one can easily turn what should be a means of sincerely obeying Allah, the Exalted, in every aspect of one's life, to an academic study on Islam which has no practical effects on their life and behaviour. The latter attitude can easily be adopted when one persists on researching and learning about knowledge which will not increase their sincere obedience to Allah, the Exalted. This is easily identified as the knowledge which Allah, the Exalted, has not spoken about in the Holy Quran nor what has been discussed by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in his Hadiths. All religious knowledge not discussed in these two sources of guidance is irrelevant and therefore not needed to guide one to peace and success in both worlds. If it was needed, it would have been discussed in these two sources of guidance. Therefore, any religious knowledge rooted in the two sources of guidance is relevant and must be researched and acted on, all other religious knowledge should be avoided.

Knowledge - 4

In a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 253, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that the one who obtains religious knowledge in order to show off to scholars, argue with others or attract attention to themselves will go to Hell.

Even though, the foundation of all good in both worldly and religious matters is knowledge, muslims must understand that knowledge will only benefit them when they firstly correct their intention. Meaning, they strive to obtain and act on knowledge in order to please Allah, the Exalted. All other reasons will only lead to a loss of reward and even punishment if a muslim fails to sincerely repent.

In reality, knowledge is like rain water which falls on different types of trees. Some trees grow by this water in order to benefit others, such as a fruit tree. Whereas, other trees grow by this water and become a nuisance to others. Even though, the rain water is the same in both cases yet the outcomes are very different. Similarly, religious knowledge is the same for people but if one adopts the incorrect intention then it will become a means of their destruction. Conversely, if one adopts the correct intention it will become a means of their salvation.

Muslims should therefore correct their intention in all matters, as they will be judged on this. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1. And they should remember that one of the first people to enter Hell will be a scholar who only obtained knowledge in order to show off to others. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 4923.

In addition, one must couple their good intention with acting on their knowledge, as knowledge without action is not beneficial knowledge, it is merely information. Failing to act on one's knowledge is like a doctor who fails to implement their knowledge of medicine to treat people. The same way they do not benefit themselves or others, neither does a Muslim who possesses Islamic knowledge and fails to implement it. In fact, this person has been compared to a donkey that carries books of knowledge. Chapter 62 Al Jumu'ah, verse 5:

“...and then did not take it on (did not act on their knowledge) is like that of a donkey who carries volumes [of books]...”

In addition, whoever conceals knowledge without a valid reason will be bridled with fire on Judgment Day. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2649. Therefore, Muslims must share the useful knowledge they gain with others. It is simply foolish not to as this is one of the righteous deeds which will benefit a Muslim even after they die. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 241. Those who hoarded knowledge were forgotten by history but those who

shared it with others became known as the scholars and teachers of mankind.

Finally, the purpose of gaining knowledge is not to defeat others in debates. The duty of a Muslim is to present the truth to others correctly with strong evidence. They have not been assigned the duty of forcing people to accept the truth through argumentation and debating. This attitude only pushes people further from the truth. Instead, one should explain the truth to people without arguing and show this truth by acting on it themselves. This is how the righteous predecessors behaved and this method is much more effective in bringing others towards the truth.

Knowledge - 5

In a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 219, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that learning one verse of the Holy Quran is better than offering 100 cycles of voluntary prayer. And learning a topic of Islamic knowledge, even if one does not act on it, is better than offering 1000 cycles of voluntary prayer.

Learning a verse includes studying and more importantly, practically implementing its teachings in one's life. And it is important to note, a muslim will only gain this reward when they sincerely strive to act on the topic of knowledge they have learned and practically implement it when the opportunity presents itself. Only when one does not gain the opportunity to act on their topic of Islamic knowledge will they gain the reward of offering 1000 cycles of prayer, even if they do not actually act on it. This is because Allah, the Exalted, judges and rewards people based on their intention and will therefore grant reward to those who would sincerely act when given the opportunity. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1.

Finally, as indicated by the main Hadith under discussion gaining and acting on knowledge is far superior to voluntary worship. This is because the majority of muslims do not understand the Arabic language and are therefore less likely to improve their behavior and obedience to Allah, the Exalted, in a positive way as they do not understand the language they use to worship Allah, the Exalted. Whereas, learning and acting on knowledge

is much more likely to inspire one to change for the better. This is the reason why some muslims spend decades performing voluntary worship yet, do not improve their behavior towards Allah, the Exalted, or people in the slightest. This by far is not the best course of action.

In addition, one cannot worship nor obey Allah, the Exalted, in their daily activities nor fulfill the rights of people correctly without knowledge. The ignorant person will commit sins without realizing it, as they are not aware what actions are considered sins. An ignorant person often fails to perform good deeds with their full conditions and etiquettes, so their many acts of voluntary worship will be deficient. Whereas, the knowledgeable may perform less good deeds but they will perform them correctly thereby gaining more reward than the ignorant worshipper.

Knowledge - 6

In a Hadith found in Imam Munzari's, Awareness and Apprehension, number 2520, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised the characteristics of a fortunate person.

The first characteristic is that they act on their useful knowledge. Knowledge is only beneficial when one acts on it, otherwise it is something which will testify against them on Judgment Day. Not acting on one's knowledge and expecting to obtain success is as foolish as the one who possesses a map to their desired destination yet does not use it and still hopes to reach their destination safely. It is vital for muslims to fulfill both aspects of knowledge. The first is gaining it from a reliable source and the second is to sincerely act on it for the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted. A muslim must find the path to Paradise and journey down it in order to reach it.

Knowledge - 7

In a Hadith found in Imam Munzari's, Awareness and Apprehension, number 2556, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, gave glad tidings to the one who possesses the following characteristics.

The final thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is that the fortunate person is the one who acts according to their knowledge. This is important to do as ignoring one's knowledge and acting contrary to it is a sign of great ignorance. This type of knowledge is not beneficial at all. In fact, it will only testify against a person on Judgment Day. Knowledge is only useful when it is correctly acted on, just like a map only leads to the desired destination when it is used. Failing to act on knowledge will not take one down the path to Paradise, it will only leave them in darkness; confused and lost.

Knowledge - 8

I had a thought which I wanted to share. The elders of a family, especially parents, often use a statement which they believe indicates their right guidance namely, elders know best. To be honest this statement was true in the day of the righteous predecessors as the elders at that time used to strive in gaining and acting on beneficial knowledge. They put aside their own opinions and thinking and instead adopted the advice of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Because of their sincere efforts they were granted right guidance by Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 29 Al Ankabut, verse 69:

“And those who strive for Us - We will surely guide them to Our ways...”

Therefore, this statement applied to them and the youngsters in those days benefited if they acted on the advice of these elders. But unfortunately times have changed. In this day and age the majority of elders do not seek nor act on beneficial knowledge instead the vast majority act on their cultural practices which in most cases do not have a foundation in Islamic teachings. They flee from beneficial knowledge and are very content with these teachings based on made up cultural practices. Because of this ignorance elders are now sometimes right and sometimes wrong. Therefore, the statement elders know best no longer applies.

It is important to note this does not mean a Muslim should ignore or disrespect their elders as this completely contradicts the teachings of Islam. They should instead strive to gain correct beneficial knowledge, hear the advice of others, including their elders, and then make a choice which is indicated by Islam in all their matters even if it contradicts the opinions of others. A Muslim should not blindly follow their elders as this in most cases will lead them away from the teachings of Islam. Chapter 6 Al An'am, verse 116:

“And if you obey most of those upon the earth, they will mislead you from the way of Allah. They follow not except assumption, and they are not but misjudging.”

This is possible to do while maintaining respect for others especially one's elders. If Muslims do this then perhaps a day will come when this statement will once again be true.

Knowledge - 9

I had a thought which I wanted to share. Muslims often complain about feeling disconnected from Allah, the Exalted, even though they attend religious gatherings and listen to religious lectures. One of the main reasons this occurs is because they have adopted the incorrect attitude which contradicts the attitude of the righteous predecessors. They take part in these activities looking for lawful entertainment. They do not intend to seek and act upon beneficial knowledge in order to increase their obedience to Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience, which leads to the closeness of Allah, the Exalted. This was the attitude of the righteous predecessors who only intended the closeness of Allah, the Exalted, in all their activities. A good way to determine whether one is acting with the right attitude is by assessing themselves after taking part in the activity. If they gained useful knowledge or were reminded of useful knowledge which inspires them to increase their obedience to Allah, the Exalted, then it is useful. If this does not occur then either the religious gathering or lecture has a fault in it or the listener has a fault in their intention. Either way they have not fulfilled the main purpose of religious gatherings or lectures. A Muslim should avoid gatherings and lectures which concentrate more on entertainment such as telling stories which may fascinate the crowd but have no beneficial lessons in them. Only through attending the correct gatherings with the correct intention will a Muslim achieve the closeness of Allah, the Exalted. Otherwise they are merely taking part in gatherings of entertainment which will not improve their character nor will they increase them in the obedience and closeness of Allah, the Exalted.

Knowledge - 10

I had a thought which I wanted to share. It is important for Muslims to understand that their worldly knowledge irrespective of how much they possess is not enough to gain success in their religious life. Even though, gaining useful worldly knowledge is praiseworthy according to the teachings of Islam as it is an excellent means for one to obtain lawful provision for themselves and their dependents yet, it is not enough to safely guide them through their religious life. For example, in most cases, worldly knowledge will not teach someone how to safely journey through a difficulty or a test in a way which pleases Allah, the Exalted, so that they gain reward in both worlds. The obligatory duties and traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, cannot be acted on by a Muslim who only possesses worldly knowledge. In fact, religious knowledge has the power to guide one to success in both worlds whereas worldly knowledge will only aid someone in this world. The one who possesses religious knowledge will adhere to the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, which will result in such blessings and grace that they will find success in both worlds. Whereas, worldly knowledge will inspire one to deduce their own path in religion instead of acting according to the teachings of the rightly guided namely, the righteous predecessors. Religion is not to about creating one's own path it is simply to adhere to Islamic teachings.

Unfortunately, many Muslims who possess worldly knowledge do not realise this important point which only reduces their chances of achieving success in both worlds. Therefore, Muslims should strive to obtain and act on both religious and useful worldly knowledge if they desire success in both worlds. This is why gaining useful knowledge is a duty on all Muslims according to a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 224.

Knowledge - 11

I had a thought which I wanted to share. Even though the amount of Islamic scholars, lecturers and Islamic educational material has increased over time yet, the strength of Muslims has only decreased. There are many factors for this. One of the main reasons is that many scholars have not adopted the correct intention when teaching others. Instead of following in the footsteps of the righteous predecessors by teaching only for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, they taught for other reasons such as to gain popularity and worldly things. For example, they often strive to be in the spotlight of gatherings and events and are not pleased with a seat which is to one side they instead desire a central seat. When their intention became like this Allah, the Exalted, removed the positive effect of their speeches and therefore they have little positive influence over their listeners.

Another factor is that the intention of the listeners is not correct. They attend lectures not for sake of Allah, the Exalted, and changing for the better instead many only attend lectures searching for a spiritual high just like a music concert. They seek entertainment not reformation. They please themselves by claiming they are working hard in order to act on Islamic teachings by attending many events and gatherings yet, because of their attitude they do not change for the better by acting on the lessons they have heard. They believe merely listening is good enough to please Allah, the Exalted, and to succeed. It is why some attend lectures for decades yet do not change at all for the better.

Finally, many of the scholars failed to act on what they preach. For example, they teach others to unite yet they are disconnected from other

scholars and fail to aid other scholars and institutions in good as they fear they will be forgotten if they do so. They advise others to turn away from the material world yet, they are the most engrossed in it. Even though, they claim to be detached in their hearts, which in most cases is not true, they still have deviated from the tradition of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, who was the most detached from this world both outwardly and inwardly. They should have shown a practical example instead of saying one thing and doing another. This caused their teachings to become ineffective.

Knowledge - 12

I read a news article a while ago, which I wanted to briefly discuss. It reported on how some people achieve success only after becoming experts in their field. It is important to note, Islam teaches muslims that they do not need to become scholars in order to achieve real success in both worlds. All they require is to strive to learn and act on the simple teachings of Islam according to their ability and potential. This is easily achievable by a non-scholar. For example, a muslim can begin by understanding and acting on three verses of the Holy Quran which will guide them towards eternal success. The first is chapter 65 At Talaq, verse 2:

“...And whoever fears Allah - He will make for him a way out.”

According to this verse a muslim has been guaranteed right guidance and success in all aspects of their life as long as they fulfil the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refrain from His prohibitions and face destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This will ensure they use the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, which in turn leads to peace and success in both worlds. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely

give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

The next verse is found in chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 216:

"...But perhaps you hate a thing and it is good for you; and perhaps you love a thing and it is bad for you. And Allah knows, while you know not."

This verse helps a muslim to overcome all difficulties they could possibly face during their life. A muslim must understand each situation has many beneficial wisdoms behind it which are not immediately apparent. One can find many examples within their own life when they believed something was good but it ended up being bad and vice versa. Therefore, they should patiently endure each difficulty, by avoiding complaining and maintaining their obedience to Allah, the Exalted, knowing the situation is best for them, even if they do not observe the wisdoms behind them.

The final verse is found in chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 286:

"Allah does not charge a soul except [with that within] its capacity..."

This verse reminds muslims that no difficulty or obligation they must fulfil is beyond their strength to endure or fulfil. This understanding removes impatience and removes despair when facing difficulties and inspires one with the strength to overcome laziness and fulfil their duties towards Allah, the Exalted, and the creation.

Islam teaches simple yet far reaching lessons which muslims must study and act on. But these lessons do not require one to become a scholar in order to achieve a successful outcome, unlike many worldly things which require a person to become an expert before they can obtain success.

Knowledge - 13

I read a news article a while ago, which I wanted to briefly discuss. It reported on how the exchanging of information and knowledge has increased over the years especially, over social media.

Even though, the number of preachers has increased over time and accessing information has become easier, yet the strength of muslims has only weakened. One of the reasons is that many muslims have adopted a mentality which has hindered them from learning and acting on Islamic knowledge. They believe merely listening to Islamic knowledge is good enough to succeed. This is a trap of the Devil and completely contradicts the attitude of the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, and the righteous predecessors. They not only listened to religious knowledge but they fully intended and fulfilled this intention by acting on the knowledge they heard. Failing to act in this way has caused the faith of muslims to weaken. It is the reason why some muslims have spent decades attending religious gatherings and talks yet have not changed for the better at all. The danger of this attitude is that eventually people will fall lower by believing that they can simply declare Islam with their tongues without the need to listen or act on religious teachings. Muslims will be left with ignorance as their guide which will only lead them to destruction.

To conclude, the purpose of Islamic knowledge is not to entertain people. Its purpose is to practically guide people through all the situations they face in this world so that they obtain peace of mind in this world and Paradise in the next. The one who fails to implement the knowledge they listen to will not obtain this right guidance. Their

example is like the one who has directions to a safe place yet fails to practically follow these directions to safety. Or like the sick patient who is prescribed the cure yet fails to take the medicine. This attitude must be avoided. Chapter 17 Al Isra, verse 82:

“And We send down of the Quran that which is healing and mercy for the believers, but it does not increase the wrongdoers except in loss.”

Knowledge - 14

I read a news article a while ago, which I wanted to briefly discuss. It mentioned how the marriage rates in a certain country were decreasing over time. The people claimed that they did not desire to take on the responsibilities of marriage.

If a person accepted a job offer without knowing the information linked to it, such as the responsibilities of the job, their salary and any insurance offered, this person would be labelled absolutely crazy by others. An intelligent person would never accept a job offer without knowing these important details. Yet, many people are desperate to take on certain duties without possessing knowledge on the responsibilities attached to them. For example, these people are desperate to get married, yet they possess little or no knowledge on the responsibilities and duties of a husband or a wife and what the rights of each spouse are. This is a major reason why the divorce rates amongst muslims has skyrocketed over recent years. Similarly, these types of people are desperate to have children, yet possess little or no knowledge on the responsibilities of raising a child, such as the rights of parents and children. Again, this is a major cause why the number of muslim youth in prisons has greatly increased in recent years. Couples have children but fail to raise them in the correct way. How could they when they do not possess the knowledge to do so?

It is vital for muslims to first learn and understand the responsibilities of the things they desire to do before they step into the situation. As without this knowledge, they will cause nothing but trouble for themselves and others. The same way they do not accept a job offer without knowing its

responsibilities, they should never take on other duties which are harder than a worldly job, such as marriage, without knowing the responsibilities involved.

Knowledge - 15

I read a news article a while ago, which I wanted to briefly discuss. It reported on some people who travelled to a foreign country and broke a law which they were unaware of during their trip. It is important to understand that the famous statement ignorance is bliss is not true especially, in respect to religious affairs and the hereafter. Unfortunately, some muslims believe just because they do not know an Islamic rule they are exempt from obeying it and Allah, the Exalted, will not hold them accountable for it. This is one of the worse types of ignorance, as Allah, the Exalted, has made it clear that there are no excuses and muslims must learn and act on the teachings of Islam. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, declared this to be a duty on all muslims in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 224. It is a trap of the Devil to believe ignorance is an acceptable excuse and one does not need to gain knowledge about Islam. If a government does not accept this excuse, how can one expect Allah, the Exalted, to? Just like a person who takes on a responsibility is expected to know the rules attached to it, such as being a licensed driver, the one who accepts Islam as their religion is responsible for learning the rules linked to it. Therefore, muslims must avoid ignorance, as it will not benefit them in this world and it will certainly not aid them in the hereafter. Chapter 6 Al An'am, verse 149:

“Say, “Allah has the most conclusive argument...””

Knowledge - 16

A great distraction which prevents one from submitting to the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, is ignorance. It can be argued that it is the origin of every sin as the one who truly knows the consequences of sins would never commit them. This refers to true beneficial knowledge which is knowledge that is acted upon. In reality, all knowledge which is not acted on is not beneficial knowledge. The example of the one who behaves in this manner is described in the Holy Quran as a donkey which carries books of knowledge which do not benefit it. Chapter 62 Al Jumu'ah, verse 5:

“...and then did not take it on (did not act upon knowledge) is like that of a donkey who carries volumes [of books]...”

A person who acts on their knowledge rarely slips up and commits sins intentionally. In fact, when this occurs it is only caused by a moment of ignorance where a person forgets to act on their knowledge which results in them sinning.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once highlighted the seriousness of ignorance in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2322. He declared that everything in the material world is cursed except for the remembrance of Allah, the Exalted, whatever is connected to this remembrance, the scholar and the student of knowledge. This means that all the blessings in the material world will

become a curse for the one who is ignorant as they will misuse them thereby committing sins.

In fact, ignorance can be considered a person's worse enemy as it prevents them from protecting themselves from harm and gaining benefit all of which can only be achieved through acting on knowledge. The ignorant commits sins without being aware of them. How can one avoid a sin if they do not know what is considered a sin? Ignorance causes one to neglect their obligatory duties. How can one fulfil their duties if they are unaware of what their duties are?

It is therefore a duty on all Muslims to gain enough knowledge to fulfil all their obligatory duties and avoid sins. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 224.

Knowledge - 17

Listening correctly to Islamic knowledge is the only way one can correctly adhere to its teachings. It is important to understand the difference between hearing and listening. Hearing is simply acknowledging a sound with one's mind even if they fail to make sense of the noise. For example, a person may hear someone shouting at them from a great distance but they will not be able to understand what they are saying. Whereas, listening involves hearing a sound and understanding it so that one's behaviour changes. For example, a person giving a specific verbal instruction to another who responds appropriately after hearing and understanding the instructions.

Muslims need to hear Islamic knowledge and strive to understand it so that it affects their behaviour in a positive way. Unfortunately, many Muslims have failed to live up to this in respect to the Holy Quran as they are good at hearing the recitation of the Holy Quran but fail to correctly listen to it which involves understanding and acting on its teachings.

To conclude, simply hearing the word of Allah, the Exalted, is not good enough to obtain success one must strive to instead truly listen to it.

Knowledge - 18

I had a thought, which I wanted to share. It is important for Muslims who study Islamic teachings to avoid an attitude which prevents them from benefiting from their studying. This is when one studies Islamic teachings with purely an academic attitude. The academic attitude is observed in those who pursue worldly knowledge and research. The worldly knowledge these students gain does not influence the way they live and interact with Allah, the Exalted, or the creation. It is a purely academic study which has no bearing on the student's everyday life, behaviour and attitude. This can occur in students of Islamic knowledge also. They become fascinated by the knowledge they gain but fail to understand the lessons and morals behind the knowledge and therefore the knowledge fails to mould their character, behaviour and life in a positive way whereby they increase their sincere obedience to Allah, the Exalted, which involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Him. And their knowledge fails to encourage them to fulfill the rights of people, the least of which is to treat others how one desires to be treated by people. Approaching Islamic studies in a purely academic way may increase a person's knowledge but it will not mould their character in a positive way. This makes the knowledge they have gained fruitless. Chapter 62 Al Jumu'ah, verse 5:

“...and then did not take it on (did not act on their knowledge) is like that of a donkey who carries volumes [of books]...”

One must always bear in mind that their purpose and intention to study Islamic teachings should be to improve their behaviour towards Allah,

the Exalted, and people. If this does not occur then they are not on the right path and are therefore far from right guidance.

Knowledge - 19

I had a thought, which I wanted to share. Many Muslims have the habit of always searching, reading and listening to Islamic knowledge taken from sources other than the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. They behave in this manner as they desire to experience something new and different and therefore behave dismissively towards the teachings from these two sources of guidance. But they fail to understand that the key to peace of mind and success in both worlds lies in understanding and acting on these two sources of guidance. This is indicated in many verses, such as chapter 16 An Nahl, Verse 89:

"...And We have sent down to you the Book as clarification for all things and as guidance and mercy and good tidings for the Muslims."

The clarification refers to all the things one needs to gain peace and success in both worlds.

Unfortunately, even many Islamic preachers have adopted this attitude in order to please and please their audiences. The time they should be preaching directly from the two sources of guidance, such as the Friday sermon, they dedicate to unauthentic events and stories from alternate sources.

In addition, seeking knowledge from alternate sources can lead to learning and acting on unverified and inaccurate knowledge, as many of these stories and events taken from other sources are not authentic and have been fabricated. And many of these stories deal with irrelevant knowledge and topics which will not be questioned about on Judgement Day. Furthermore, many of these stories and events are based on things which contradict Islamic teachings, but as these contradictions are often subtle they are overlooked by the majority of the audience. For example, these stories often push the topic of complete and unquestionable obedience to one's spiritual teacher, even though this is not something the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, did with each other, even during the time of the rightly guided Caliphs of Islam, may Allah be pleased with them. In fact, there are many authentic and widely known events when the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, respectfully challenged the method of the rightly guided Caliphs, may Allah be pleased with them. For example, Umar Ibn Khattab and many other Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, respectfully challenged, the first Caliph of Islam, Abu Bakr Siddique, may Allah be pleased with him, when he decided to fight against the Muslims who refused to donate the obligatory charity. Even though, Abu Bakr Siddique, may Allah be pleased with him, was correct in his decision, none the less, the other Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, did not blindly follow him. They instead, respectfully objected to his decision until he clarified his decision to them. This has been discussed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 124.

Total and unquestionable obedience is only for Allah, the Exalted, and His divinely guided Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

To conclude, a Muslim should understand that learning and acting on the two sources of guidance leads to peace and success in both worlds. In fact, the more they dedicate themselves to these two sources of guidance, the more doors of wisdoms and understanding will be opened for them. Therefore, there is no need to search for right guidance and Islamic knowledge from unreliable and unauthentic sources. This was the attitude of the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, and is the only path to success. Chapter 29 Al Ankabut, verse 69:

“As for those who struggle in Our cause, We will surely guide them along Our Way. And Allah is certainly with the good-doers.”

Knowledge - 20

I had a thought, which I wanted to share. Striving to gain worldly or religious knowledge which will aid one to obey Allah, the Exalted, is praiseworthy in Islam. Unfortunately, many communities within Muslims fail to encourage their children, especially their daughters, towards education, as they claim they will simply get married, have children and live as house wives/mums. Even though, there is no harm in a woman choosing to be a house mum/wife if she desires to be one, none the less there are many benefits of a worldly education which must not be overlooked. A worldly education is important as it helps to shape and mould one's character. Through it, one learns how the world works and how to deal with different situations and types of people. All of these things will aid a Muslim woman to deal with the different situations she is bound to face in life.

In addition, a worldly education which leads to a good career allows a Muslim woman to be more selective when choosing a spouse. Whereas, an uneducated woman will always have less freedom of choice. Being more selective will allow a Muslim woman to choose a suitable spouse, according to the teachings of Islam, who will fulfill her rights.

Having a worldly education also causes others to respect her more, such as her husband. The one who is respected more is bound to be treated better by others.

Finally, the educated Muslim woman who has a career becomes financially independent of all others, such as her husband. This will cause others to respect her more and it will reduce the chances of her being wronged by her husband, as a major cause of a wife being mistreated by her husband is when he knows she is completely dependent on him. In many cases, if the abuse is too much, an uneducated woman is much less likely to walk away from her abusive husband as she is completely dependent on him. She may well be turned away by her parents also, as they cannot afford to take care of her and her children. This often occurs within the Muslim community. Whereas, if the Muslim woman was educated, she is in the right financial position to leave her husband and provide for herself and her children through her own career. This does not mean she should leave her husband over petty issues, as this is childish and criticised by Islam. But it means that a worldly education gives a woman financial freedom, something which is vital when facing marriage difficulties, such as divorce.

These are just some reasons why it is vital for Muslims to gain a worldly education for themselves and encourage the next generation to do the same.

Knowledge - 21

I had a thought, which I wanted to share. In the following verse of the Holy Quran, Allah, the Exalted, criticizes a mentality which the past nations adopted, which has now been adopted by the Muslim nation. Chapter 23 Al Mu'minun, verse 53:

"But they [the people] divided their religion among them into portions [sects] - each faction, in what it has, rejoicing."

If one observes the Muslim nation, they will see this attitude amongst countless schools of thought and sects. Each firmly believes they are on the side of the Angels and in many cases, they criticise and condemn the other sects and schools of thought. They are completely satisfied with their interpretations and understanding of Islam without any signs of doubts in their creed. It is strange to observe so many different schools of thought yet all of them are completely sure they alone are on the right path.

One of the main reasons this attitude is adopted by people is due to misplaced loyalty. Instead of following in the footsteps of the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, whose loyalty was to none other than Allah, the Exalted, and His Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, the people after them placed their loyalty to their school of thought and their elders above all else. Even if they felt like an Islamic

concept taken from another school of thought seemed more accurate, they still rejected it and instead followed the interpretation put forward by their own school of thought, simply out of blind loyalty. As people are not perfect, their interpretation of Islamic teachings will never be completely perfect. Therefore, no school of thought, which relies on the interpretations given by their elders, can be completely perfect. Someone who is loyal to Allah, the Exalted, and His Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, will recognize this truth and will therefore accept the best interpretation of Islamic teachings from any school of thought. Muslims must avoid blind loyalty and blind following as it can lead to misguidance and as it contradicts the way of Islam. Chapter 12 Yusuf, verse 108:

"Say, "This is my way; I invite to Allāh with insight, I and those who follow me..."

Instead, one must maintain their loyalty to Allah, the Exalted, and His Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, by accepting and acting on the best interpretations of Islamic knowledge, irrespective of who it comes from.

All praise is due to Allah, Lord of the worlds and may peace and blessings be upon His final Messenger, Muhammad, his noble Family and Companions.

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