

Tibyan

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Importance of Acquiring knowledge in Islam

First of all let us congratulate you on the completion of the academic year 2016 - 17 successfully. Alhamdulillah with the WILL of Allah (swt) and blessings of Ahlulbayt (as) we will begin our next academic year after the holidays.

As a Muslim, a believer and follower of Ahlulbayt (as) we hold high respect for them and we know that they hold the highest level of knowledge (Ilm) and wisdom (hikmat) among all the creations of Allah (swt). And they as our leaders and Imams have left a fair amount of advice and guidance for us.

First of all before we quote their ahadith, lets see what does our common sense says. We know that Holy Prophet (saws) said "انا مدينة العلم وعلی بابها" (I am the city of knowledge and Ali is its doors). Therefore if the leader of a community is the most knowledgeable and the people of the community claim to follow them, then they should also display the same standards of skills and attributes, they should also display the quality of knowledge and wisdom in them, they should possess the greatest level of knowledge in each field. However we notice that as followers of Ahlulbayt (a) we are not very active in the field of education and knowledge, rather we are among the least educated people.

Shahid thani in his books states that "perfection and completion of man is based on his knowledge and the hindsight, because in light of this knowledge man can position himself among the angels and attain great levels in heaven. A knowledgeable man will not only attain great levels in the hereafter but will be appreciated and thanked by the people of the world", for he was able to help the society progress with the help of his knowledge. Hence knowledge benefits in this world and the hereafter.

Knowledge takes man towards guidance, perfection and completion. Ahlulbayt (a) were at the highest level of perfection, hence we all should aim at attaining perfection and one of the ways to attain perfection is by gaining knowledge.

Knowledge can be categorized as ilm e dunyawi and Ilm e deeni. Some believe that only Ilm e deeni will benefit us in the akhirat and not ilm e dunyawi, however one must realise that any ilm which is gained with niyyat of Qurbatan Ilallah will benefit us in dunya and akhirat. Anyone who increases his dunyawi knowledge and if used properly can act as guidance towards marefat of Allah (swt) and Ahlulbayt (a), and the greater the marefat the greater the benefits in the world and the hereafter.

Allah (swt) created man with needs and the needs are unlimited, apart from the need for food, water and shelter, we need many other services, we need Doctors, Engineers, Lawyers, Computer professionals, Financial experts, Business professionals etc to help and guide us in our day to day activities.

Hence we should give a great amount of importance to pursuing knowledge in various fields, if someone is good in science they should pursue their field in Biology, Physics, Chemistry, Technology, Engineering etc etc, if someone is good in Maths, they should pursue that field. However if someone does not give much importance to knowledge they will lose in the dunya and in the hereafter. As they end up spending a poor life in the world and due to lack of knowledge they were not able to gain enough marefat of Ahlulbayt (a) as well.

Shahid Thani in his book says, when a scholar walks on the road, angels spread their wings underneath their feets and all the creatures of the world -

- seeks forgiveness for him from Allah (swt). Because a righteous scholar views the world in the light of truth and does not allow any corruption around him. One must not pursue knowledge purely for personal benefits and gains, but for the benefit of the society as a whole.

One must also understand that there are conditions and criteria to pursue knowledge, One should not pursue knowledge for the sake of pursuing it, but for the benefit of the mankind as a whole.

Holy Quran says "Among the worshippers of Allah, only the scholars fear him" (35:28), Hence those who truly pursue knowledge, the outcome of knowledge is the true understand of Greatness (Azmat) of Allah (swt) which in turn leads to absolute submission.

The first ayat revealed by Holy Quran says "Read in the name of your lord who created", if we notice the first 5 ayats that were revealed, we will see that how much Allah (swt) emphasizes upon education.

"Read in the Name of your Lord who created; created man from a clinging mass. Read, and your Lord is the most generous, who taught by the pen, taught man what he did not know." (96:1 - 5)

From the above ayats we relate to the fact that man is positioned between two states, ignorance and knowledge and Allah swt says "Read" – so that we can learn. He swt also says "We taught man what he did not know." Which also points to the fact that Allah swt prefers man NOT to be in the state of ignorance but to be in the state of knowledge and learning. As a learned man is a wise man and a wise man utilizes his life and resources carefully and wisely so that he can achieve a meaningful goal.

If we look at the process of creation of Hazrat Adam (as), Allah swt created Hazrat Adam (as)

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- and taught him the names first, gave him the knowledge and when Hazrat Adam (a) was the bearer of knowledge, Allah (swt) asks all the angels to prostrate him.

Even the lives of our Imams (a) constantly revolved around Ilm, Imam Ali (a) is well known for his Ilm, and Imam Baqir (a) and Imam Sadiq (a) are recognized from the fact that they were the first ones to start the concept of University. Even Imam Sajjad (a) used to buy slaves and teach them knowledge and release them.

The University of Imam Sadiq (a) had more than 4000 students in it, today if we hear 4000 students it looks like a small number, however at that time if we talk about 4000 students it is equal to ten lakhs students today. So that is how knowledgeable was Imam Sadiq (a), students from different countries and different sects would come to study at the university of Imam Sadiq (a). He used to teach different subjects like, Fiqh, Usool, Kalam, Ahkam, Philosophy, Physics, Chemistry, Astrology and many more. Some of his students are well known across the world, Geber who is also the father of chemistry is Jabir ibne Hayyan a direct student of Imam Sadiq (a), others like Avicenna and Avirush are indirect students of Imam Sadiq (a) they are Boo Ali Sina and Ibne Rushd who are famous for their work in Medicine and philosophy. Knowledge has always been one of the most important pillar in the lives of our Imams and scholars.

Hence if we are truly the followers of Ahlulbayt (a) and believe in Allah (swt) and Islam then one of the most important goals in our life would be to seek the right knowledge and with that knowledge serve the mankind and derive benefits for the world and the hereafter.

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