

The Manners of those Seeking Knowledge and Students of the Qur'an in Islam

Translated and compiled by abouttajweed.com staff

Many Muslims know that seeking knowledge is encouraged in Islam, but few know what is necessary as far as intention, deeds, and manners when seeking knowledge.

Abu Hurairah, may Allah be pleased with him, said, "I heard the Messenger of Allah, , say, "The world is cursed, that which is in it is cursed, except thikr Allah (remembering Allah) and what follows it, or a learned person, or a student. Related by Ibn Maajah. ¹

In another saying related by Ad-Daarimi, Ka'b said, "The world is cursed and that which is in it is cursed except a teacher of khair and a student of it."

The Messenger of Allah also said, "Who takes the path hoping for knowledge, Allah makes easy for him the path to Paradise. Verily, the angels lower their wings for the seeker of knowledge out of pleasure of what he is doing. Verily all in the heavens and earth seek forgiveness for the knowledgeable, even the fish in the water. The excellence of the knowledgeable over the servant is like the excellence of the moon on the night of the full moon over all the planets. Verily, the learned are the heirs of the Prophets, the Prophets do not leave dinar or dirham, but they are inherited in knowledge, and he who takes it takes a great bounty." Abu Dawood, Ibn Maajah, and Ibn Habbaan. ²

¹Hadeeth hasan, Saheeh Ibn Maajah, Sheikh Albani 3320, and the hadeeth is:
"سمعت رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم هو يقول الدنيا ملعونة ملعون ما فيها إلا ذكر الله وما والاه أو عالماً أو متعلماً"

² Hadeeth Saheeh, Saheeh Abee Dawood, Sheikh Albani 3096, and the hadeeth is:
"من سلك طريقاً يطلب فيه علماً، سلك الله به طريقاً من طرق الجنة، وإن الملائكة لتضع أجنحتها رضا لطالب العلم، وإن العالم ليستغفر له من في السموات ومن في الأرض، والحيتان في جوف الماء، وإن فضل العالم على العابد كفضل القمر ليلة البدر على سائر الكواكب، وإن العلماء ورثة الأنبياء، وإن الأنبياء لم يورثوا ديناراً ولا درهماً، ورثوا العلم فمن أخذه بحظ وافر"

Purity of Intention

The first thing needed by the seeker of knowledge is to realize that seeking knowledge is worship ('ibaadah). Some scholars said, "Knowledge is secret prayer and worship of the heart."³ The condition of worship is: **Purity of Intention for Allah, the Exalted** as demonstrated in the aayah:

﴿ وَمَا أُمِرُوا إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ مُخْلِصِينَ لَهُ الدِّينَ حُنَفَاءَ ﴾

A translation of the explanation of the meaning is:

And they were not ordered but to worship Allah, keeping religion pure for Him.

Al-Bayyinah 5

The necessity of purity of intention is also demonstrated in the agreed upon hadeeth related by Amir of the believers, 'Umar bin Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, that the Prophet, ﷺ, said "Verily, the deeds are by their intentions and for every one is what they intended. So he who made hijarah [migration] for Allah and His Messenger, then his migration is for Allah and His Messenger; but he who made hijarah for the worldly gain or to marry a woman, then his migration is for that which he migrated to. "

If purity of intention in seeking knowledge is lost, it is changed from of the best of ways of obeying to the worst of violations. Nothing destroys knowledge like showing off, shirk, or showing off purity of intention exemplified in the listener saying, "I learned and memorized." The student therefore, needs to purify himself from all that ruins good intentions such as: Showing off, wanting to exceed over others, using the seeking of knowledge as a tool for another intention such as position, money, greatness, or famousness, etc.

A well known saying of Sufyaan bin Sa'eed Ath-Thawree is, "Nothing was harder for me to treat than my intention."

There are many tools to help us achieve purity of intention. Some are:

1. Striving within the self and patience with the self.
2. Compulsion in taqwaa of Allah. In surah At-Talaaq, aayah 3-4

﴿ وَمَنْ يَتَّقِ اللَّهَ يَجْعَلْ لَهُ مَخْرَجًا ﴿٣﴾ وَيَرْزُقْهُ مِنْ حَيْثُ لَا يَحْتَسِبُ ﴿٤﴾ ﴾

³ Al-Majmoo'ah Al-'Ilmiyyah, Bakr Abdilllah Abu Zayd, Dar Al-'Aasimah, Riyadh, p. 141.

[a translation of the explanation of the meaning] Allah says: ((and he who fears Allah, Allah will find a way out, and will provide for him from where he did not expect)). In an agreed upon hadeeth, the Prophet, ﷺ, was asked, "O Messenger of Allah, who is the most honored of people?" He said, "The one with the most taqwaa." He also said, ﷺ, "The most that gets people in to Paradise: Taqwaa of Allah and good manners." At-Tirmithi

3. Bringing to conscience the greatness of the Creator and that knowing He is watching at all times. This is one of the levels of ihsaan: worshipping Allah as if you see Him, for if you do not see Him, He sees you.
4. Being vigilant in getting reward from Allah and increasing good deeds.
5. Increasing dua' and beseeching Allah, requesting that He grant you purity in intention.
6. Increasing worship that is not seen by anyone such as extra fasting, praying at night.
7. Avoid seeking praise so that you do not start to trying please only mankind. In a long hadeeth related in Muslim, the Prophet, ﷺ, informed us that the first to be used as fuel for the Hell fire on the Day of Resurrection are the reciter of the Qur'an, the mujaahid, and the giver of charity; those that did those deeds so that it would be said: "So and so is a reciter; so and so is courageous, so and so is generous, so and so gives charity." May Allah protect us all from the Hell-Fire and give us all purity of intention.
8. Reading about the righteous scholars and learning about their affairs so as to be informed about them, and use them as an example. Our righteous predecessors were very strong in their fear of Allah and in obedience of Him, and studying their lives affects us and increases our drive to good righteous deeds.
9. Taking the self to account and blaming it for shortcomings in obedience and worship of Allah helps greatly in perfecting our intentions. 'Umar bin Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, said, "Account yourselves

before you are taken to account, measure before you are measured, and beautify for the Greatest Presentation on the day nothing will be hidden."

10. Accomplishment is from Allah to His servant and His desire for him khair (goodness). Whom Allah desires goodness, He makes him understand religion.⁴ Mu'amar bin Raashid said, "Verily a man seeks knowledge, but knowledge is refused to him until it is for Allah."⁵

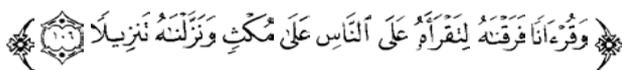
Signs of Purity of Intention

- Striving and firmness in obtaining knowledge with caution taken to understand, memorize, and not be deficient in the chosen curriculum.
- If a student enrolls in a course of knowledge, absences and tardiness are not seen from him.
- His worry is not just to be shown in front of his friends and to exceed them; instead he wishes for them what he wishes for himself.

How to Learn and Master

A famous saying of scholars is "مَنْ لَمْ يُتَقَنَّ الْأَصُولَ حُرْمَ الْوُصُولِ" which means, "He who does not master the basics is forbidden from achieving."⁶

It is necessary then for establishment and foundation of every technique or knowledge sought that there be perfection its basics and its summary at the hands of a mastered sheikh, not by self study alone, and knowledge should be taken in steps. Just as Allah, the Exalted, said:



⁴ A reference to the hadeeth: "مَنْ يَرِيدُ اللَّهُ بِهِ خَيْرًا يَفْقَهُهُ فِي الدِّينِ" Meaning: "Who Allah desires for him good, he makes him understand the religion. Saheeh Bukhari and Saheeh Muslim.

⁵ Aadaab Al-Muta'allimeen, Dr. Ahmed Abdullah Al-Baatilee, Dar Al-Qaasim, Riyadh

⁶ Quote from Tathkirah As-Saami' wa al-Mutakallim, in the book: Al-Majmoo'ah Al-'Ilmiyyah, Bakr bin Abdilllah, Abu Zayd, Dar Al-'Aasimah, Riyadh, p. 154.

((And [it is] the Qur'an, We divided that you may recite it unto mankind at intervals, and We revealed it by [successive] revelation.)) Al-Israa' 106

Learning the Qur'an

The best of knowledge is the knowledge of the Qur'an. The Messenger of Allah, , said, "The best of you are the students of the Qur'an and the teachers of it." Bukhari

The recitation of the Qur'an should have an affect on the student as they recite the words of their Creator. The student of the Qur'an is affected by knowing their Creator, increasing their taqwaa, increasing their memory function, and in saying the best of words in the most fluent way. This is, of course for those that perfect the articulation points and know the proper stops and starts.

Al-Imam Ash-Shafi'ee, may Allah be merciful to him, said, "Who learned the Qur'an was magnified in value; who wrote al-hadeeth, his argument was strengthened; who studied fiqh, his position was honored; who studied the language improved his speech; and who studied [sharee'ah] accounting will have a judicious opinion.

Teaching Qur'an from childhood was the way of our predecessors, may Allah be merciful to them. Abdulrahman bin Abee Haatim Ar-Raazee said, "My father didn't call me to work on hadeeths until I recited the Qur'an to Al-Fadhli bin Shaathaan Ar-Raazee."⁷

The learning of the Qur'an was not just for males. The scholars of Islam would teach their daughters Qur'an when young as well as giving them a proper Islamic upbringing. Imam Muhammed Al-Jazaree, the famous scholar of recitation, wrote about his daughter Salma in the preface to his book, "Ghaayatu-n-Nihaayah fee Tabaqaat al-Qurraa", and said "My daughter, may Allah, the Exalted, make her useful and assist her in that which good for her religion and other, memorized the Qur'an in the year 813 Al-Hijara, and she memorized Al-Muqaddimah At-Tajweed [known as al-Jazariyyah] and the one

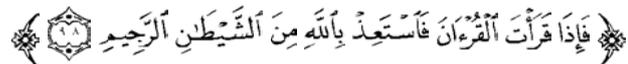
⁷ Aadaab Al-Muta'allimeen, Dr. Ahmed Abdullah Al-Baatilee, Dar Al-Qaasim, Riyadh, p. 27.

thousand of the ten qira'at. May Allah make her happy and make easy for her goodness in this world and the Hereafter."⁸

Manners with the Qur'an

One: Seeking Refuge

Seeking refuge with Allah from the rejected Satan before reading the Qur'an, following Allah's saying:



The translation of the explanation of the meaning is: *'And when you recite the Qur'an, seek refuge with Allah from the rejected Satan.'* An-Nahl 98.

The way to seek refuge is by saying: "أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ" *'A'oothu billahi minash shaytaanir rajeem.*

Some of the righteous predecessors would say:

"أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ السَّمِيعِ الْعَلِيمِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ"

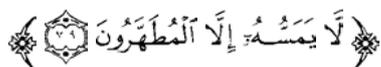
An-Nawawi said, "There is no harm in this, but the first one is the best choice."

Two: The Basmalah

Saying the basmalah at the beginning of every surah, except surah At-Tawbah, also known as Baraa'ah. The basmalah is not allowed before this surah.

Three: Tahaarah

It is preferred that the Muslim be in the state of "tahaarah" or purity, especially when touching the Qur'an with his hands directly, as shown in the generality of the aayah:

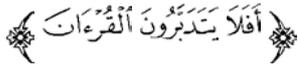


The explanation of the translation of the meaning is: *'None touch it except the purified.'* Al-Waaqi'ah 79.

Four: Pondering meaning

The Qur'an should be read with devoutness and reverence while pondering the meaning. Allah, the Exalted, says:

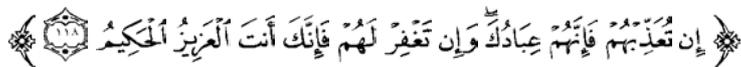
⁸ Ibid, p. 29.



Which may be explained in meaning as: *'Do they not ponder [reflect upon] the Qur'an?'* An-Nisaa' 82, Mohammed 24.

Five: Repeating aayaat

An assistance in pondering is repeating some aayaat and stopping on them to pay close attention to its meaning, just as the Messenger of Allah, , when he stood repeating one aayah until morning: and it was:



The interpretation of the translated meaning is: *'If You punish them for they are Your servants, and if You forgive them, for You are the All in Might, the All Wise'* [Al-Maa'idah 118],.⁹

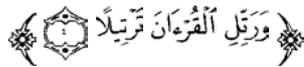
Six: Reacting with Qur'an

If an aayah praising Allah is read, one should stop and praise Him, Glorified be He, by saying "Subhaanallah", or "Tabaarak Allah" or other phrases of praise. The evidence for this is a hadeeth related by Muslim, that Huthayfah bin Al-Yamaan, may Allah be please with him said, "I prayed with the Prophet, , that night and he started with Al-Baqarah and I said [to myself], 'He will make rukoo' [bow] at 100 aayah', but then he continued. I said [to myself], 'He will pray with it [Al-Baqarah] for one raka'h', but he continued'. He then started An-Nisaa' and read it [all], and I said, 'He will make rukoo' with it' [when he finishes]. Then he started Aali 'Imraan and he read it slowly ; and when he passed an aayah that has glorification in it, he glorified, and if he passed [one having] a question, he asked, and if he passed [one] seeking refuge, he sought."

Seven: Recite with Tarteel

⁹ Related by An-Nisaa'I and Ibn Maajah, rated hasan by Sheikh Albani, Saheeh ibn Maajah 1110.

It is incumbent upon us that we recite the Qur'an with tarteel, meaning reciting slowly with tajweed, proper articulation points, and proper stops and starts. Allah said:



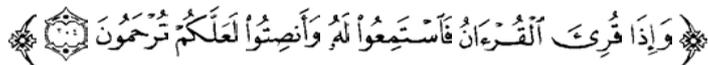
The interpretation of the meaning is: *'And recite the Qur'an with measured recitation [tarteel].'* Al-Muzzammil 4.

The scholars state that tarteel is preferred for pondering because it has the strongest affect on the heart. Ibn 'Abbaas, may Allah be pleased with him, said, "That I read a surah with tarteel is more loved to me than reading the complete Qur'an."

The reciter of the Qur'an should take caution against reading too quickly or making his goal completing a khatm [reading the complete Qur'an from the beginning to the end] quickly, or finishing a surah quickly without pondering the meaning and without being affected by its lessons.

Eight: Respect Qur'an

It is of the utmost importance that there is respect of the Qur'an by all readers of the Qur'an. Talk should be avoided while reciting the Qur'an, as well as laughter and playing around. Allah, the Exalted, said:



This aayah can be explained in meaning as: *'So when the Qur'an is recited, then listen to it and pay attention so that you may receive mercy.'* Al-A'araaf 204.

Ibn 'Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, would not talk until he finished what he intended to read from the Qur'an.¹⁰

In conclusion: All Muslim males and females should want Allah's reward in reciting the Qur'an. We should feel the meaning of purity of intention, and take care to get the great reward when we recite every glorious aayah. With

¹⁰ Aadaab Al-Muta'allimeen, p. 31

every letter we recite we get a good deed [recorded], and each good deed is as ten times of it likeness, up to 700 times. ¹¹

The effect of the Qu'ran should show itself on us in our speech, our actions, and our manners, exemplified in what bin Mas'ood, may Allah be pleased with him, said, "It is desired that the reciter of the Qur'an know his nights [getting up for recitation at night] when people are sleeping; and his days when people are awake, and by his crying when people laugh; and by his silence when people are in vain discourse. "

Manners with the teacher

It is incumbent on the student of the Qur'an to respect and honor their teacher. In a hadeeth related by At-Tirmithi, the Messenger of Allah, , said, "He is not of us who does not respect our elderly, is merciful to our youth, and knows the rights of our those who teach us."

Our righteous predecessors used to greatly emphasize respect and kindness to their shuyookh (plural of sheikh). A famous saying from many of the righteous predecessors is: "I am a slave to he who taught me a letter."

The student of knowledge should have awe for his/her teacher and should respect him. Rabee' bin Sulaymaan was the companion and student of the famous scholar, Ash-Shaafee'i and he [Sulaymaan] said, "By Allah, I was not so bold as to drink water when Ash-Shaafee'i was looking at me, out of awe of him." Ash-Shaafee'i himself showed great awe of scholars and he said of himself, "I would turn the pages very gently in front of Imaam Maalik, out of awe of him, so that he would not hear it." [Aadaab al-Muta'aalimeen, Dr. Ahmed Abdullah Al-Baatilee, Dar Al-Qaasim, Riyadh, 1418].

¹¹ Reference to the hadeeth:

قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم من قرأ حرفاً من كتاب الله فله به حسنة والحسنة بعشر أمثالها لا أقول الم حرف ولكن ألف حرف ولام حرف وميم حرف
Sheikh Albani graded it as saheeh in Saheeh At-Tirmidhi, 2327.

The student of knowledge should not address his teacher or sheikh by their first name, calling them, ya sheikh, or teacher, instead they should call them by saying, my sheikh, my teacher, or our sheikh, our teacher. The teachers shouldn't be called from a distance except in a compelled situation. The teachers should not be addressed with the ta' al-khataab (you singular). Allah, the Exalted in the Qur'an, pointed out the manners with those teaching us khair when He said in surah An-Noor aayah 63:

﴿لَا تَجْعَلُوا دُعَاءَ الرَّسُولِ بَيْنَكُمْ كَدُعَاءِ بَعْضِكُمْ بَعْضًا﴾

((Do not make the calling of the messenger among you as your calling one of another.))

It would not be proper to call your parents by their first names, and in the same respect teachers of good should not be addressed by their first names. The following is advice that Amir Al-Mu'mineen Ali bin Abee Taalib, may Allah be pleased with him, gave: "From the rights of the learned over you is that you do not ask too many questions, you do not divulge his secrets, you do not backbite about him to anyone, you do not look for error in him, if he made a mistake you accept his excuse. It is incumbent upon you to respect and magnify him as long as he keeps Allah's orders; you should not sit in front of him; if he has a need the people should race to serve him." Related by Ibn Abdulbarr, ¹² with the addition that "...You should not point to him [teacher] with your hands; you should not say, 'So and so said something different than what you said'....."

May Allah make us the best of students and the best of teachers. May Allah purify our intentions and make all we do for Him alone. May Allah grant that we will be "ahlu-l-Qur'an" or the family of the Qur'an (those that read it, study and apply it) those who are Allah's people and special ones. ¹³

¹² Aadaab Al-Muta'alimeen, Dr. Ahmed bin Abdullah Al-Baatlee, Dar Al-Qaasim, Riyadh, p. 45

¹³ Reference to the hadeeth:

قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم إن لله أهلين من الناس قالوا يا رسول الله من هم قال هم أهل القرآن أهل الله وخاصته
Meaning: The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings of Allah upon him, said, "Verily Allah has people from mankind." They said, "O Messenger of Allah, who are they?" He said, "They are those of the Qur'an [who read it often], they are the people of Allah and His special ones"
Related by Ibn Maajah, and graded as Saheeh by Sheikh Albani in "Saheeh Ibn Maajah".

References:

1. Aadaab Al-Muta'llimeen, Dr. Ahmed bin Abdullah Al-Baatilee, Dar Al-Qaasim, Riyadh, 1417 Al-Hijara.
2. Al-Majmoo'ah Al-'Ilmiyyah, Bakr bin Abdilllah, Abu Zayd, Dar Al-'Aasimah, Riyadh, 1416, Al-Hijara.
3. <http://www.albani.org/Arabic/hadeeth/hadeeth.htm> ,
<http://www.dorar.net/htmls/malbani.asp> .
4. <http://hadith.al-eman.com/>