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A Lecture Titled:
«The Importance of Seeking Knowledge»

«أهمية طلب العلم»

Lecture 01 of the Explanation of:

«The Forty Hadith»

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-May Allah preserve him-

Lecturer at the Prophet's Mosque

Al-Madinah Al-Munawarah

[Revised and approved by the sheikh]

Arabic Honorific Symbols Used:

(ﷻ):	<i>Subhânanahu wa ta'âlâ</i>	'The exalted'
(ﷻ):	<i>'Azza wa jalla</i>	'The glorified'
(ﷺ):	<i>Şalla Allâhu 'alayhi wa sallam</i>	'Blessings and peace be upon him'
(ﷺ):	<i>'Alayhis-salâm</i>	'Peace be upon him'
(ﷺ):	<i>Rađiya Allâhu 'anhu</i>	'May Allah be pleased with <u>him</u> '
(ﷺ):	<i>Rađiya Allâhu 'anha</i>	'May Allah be pleased with <u>her</u> '
(ﷺ):	<i>Rađiya Allâhu 'anhumâ</i>	'May Allah be pleased with <u>them two</u> '
(ﷺ):	<i>Rađiya Allâhu 'anhum</i>	'May Allah be pleased with <u>them</u> '
(ﷻ):	<i>Rađimahu Allâhu</i>	'May Allah have mercy on him'

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

إِنَّ الْحَمْدَ لِلَّهِ، نَحْمَدُهُ وَنَسْتَعِينُهُ وَنَسْتَغْفِرُهُ، وَنَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنْ شُرُورِ أَنْفُسِنَا وَسَيِّئَاتِ أَعْمَالِنَا، مَنْ يَهْدِهِ اللَّهُ فَلَا مُضِلَّ لَهُ، وَمَنْ يَضِلَّ فَلَا هَادِيَ لَهُ، وَأَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ، وَأَشْهَدُ أَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا عَبْدُهُ وَرَسُولُهُ، صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَعَلَى آلِهِ وَصَحْبِهِ وَسَلَّمَ تَسْلِيمًا كَثِيرًا.
أَمَّا بَعْدُ..

We praise Allah, we seek his assistance, and we seek his forgiveness. We seek refuge in Allah from the evil of ourselves and our bad deeds. Whoever Allah guides, there is none that can lead him astray, and whoever he leads astray, there is no guide for him. I bear witness that none is worthy of worship except Allah (ﷻ).. He is alone and he has no partners. And I bear witness that Mohammed ibn Abdullah (ﷺ) is his slave and messenger.

Allah (ﷻ) has raised the status of knowledge and its people in the Quran. Anyone who ponders over the verses in the Quran will be encouraged to seek knowledge and to learn more about Allah (ﷻ), the creator, and about the life that he has chosen for us. Allah (ﷻ) says in the Quran:

﴿قُلْ هَلْ يَسْتَوِي الَّذِينَ يَعْلَمُونَ وَالَّذِينَ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ﴾ [الزمر: ٩]

“Are those who have knowledge equivalent to those who do not know?”

And Allah (ﷻ) says in the Quran:

﴿يَرْفَعُ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا مِنْكُمْ وَالَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْعِلْمَ دَرَجَاتٍ﴾ [المجادلة: ١١]

“Allah will raise in station those who have believed from among you, and those who have been knowledge, he will raise them in ranks”

Likewise, Allah (ﷻ) says in the Quran:

﴿إِنَّمَا يَخْشَى اللَّهَ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ الْعُلَمَاءُ﴾ [فاطر: ٢٨]

“The only ones who truly fear Allah are the Ulama’ (i.e. the scholars, those who have knowledge).”

Allah (ﷻ) has also commanded us in the Quran to turn back to the people of knowledge when we don’t know something. When there is something that we lack in

knowledge of the deen, then Allah (ﷻ) has commanded us to return to the people of knowledge. He says:

﴿فَسْأَلُوا أَهْلَ الذِّكْرِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ﴾ [النحل: ٤٣]

“Ask the people of knowledge if you do not know”

Suleiman ibn ‘Abdulmalik (رضي الله عنه), who was one of the early *khaleefahs* of the Muslims, his *khilâfah* was between 96 and 99 of the first century of Islam. One time, he went with two of his sons to the great scholar of Islam *‘Atâa ibn abi-Rabâh*, who was from the *tâbi’een* (the followers). And he was one of the most knowledgeable of the *tâbi’een* regarding *Hajj*. So *Suleimân ibn ‘Abdulmalik*, the *khaleefah* (*amirul-mu’mineen*) went with his two sons to visit *‘Atâa ibn abi-Rabâh*. *Ibn ‘Asâkir*, who collected this story, said that *‘Atâa* was very unattractive in terms of his appearance, and he was a slave. He belonged to a woman in Mecca. He was blind in one eye, and then, at one point, he went totally blind. He also suffered from partial paralysis; he couldn’t move part of his body: one of his legs and one of his arms. He couldn’t even move! So you have the *khaleefah* of the Muslims going to visit this man because of his knowledge. When he got there, *Ata’* was praying. He waited for him to finish praying. When he got done praying, *Suleiman ibn ‘Abdulmalik* and his two sons began to ask *Ata’* about the rites of *Hajj*. As we mentioned, he was the mufti of *Hajj*. He benefited from *‘Abdullah ibn ‘Abbâs* (رضي الله عنه). He began to answer the questions that they had about the rites of *Hajj*. At that point, he turned around, away from *Suleiman* and his two sons. *Suleimân* told his two sons: get up. When they left, he told them, he said: O my sons:

(لَا تَنِيَا فِي طَلَبِ الْعِلْمِ)

Do not slacken in seeking knowledge, don’t be lethargic in your pursuit of knowledge because I will never forget the humiliation that we felt sitting in front of that slave. That is what he said: I will never forget how humiliated we felt. I am the (*amirul-mu’mineen*) and I am sitting in front of a slave. Why? Because I have to learn

how to perform the rites of *Hajj*.

Notice the words that he says to his sons. He says:

(لَا تَنْيَا فِي طَلَبِ الْعِلْمِ)

Don't slacken; don't be lethargic in seeking knowledge. This actual phrase comes in the Quran. Allah (ﷻ) told Musa when he was sending him to Pharaoh:

﴿أَذْهَبَ أَنْتَ وَأَخُوكَ بِمَا أَنْتَ بَشَرٌ مِثْلُ بَشَرٍ﴾ [طه: ٤٢]

“*You and your brother Hâroon, go to Pharaoh with my âyât*”

And then what did he say?

﴿وَلَا تَنْيَا فِي ذِكْرِي﴾ [طه]

“*And don't slacken in my remembrance*”

Don't be lethargic in the remembrance of Allah (ﷻ), because the remembrance of Allah assists and aids the servant in everything that he does and makes things easier for him. So *Suleiman* gave his sons the same advice: do not slacken in seeking knowledge. This story has a lot of benefits to it. Perhaps we will go through some of those benefits.

The first thing is ‘*Atâa ibn abi-Rabâh*’ was a slave. If you were to measure him by the standards of *Dunyâ*, he was nothing. But Allah (ﷻ) raised him because of his knowledge. So, by knowledge Allah (ﷻ) raises people. Otherwise, he would have been nothing; he was a slave, he was blind, he was paralyzed, etc..

The second thing is that even though *Suleiman ibn ‘Abdulmalik* was the *khaleefah* of the Muslims, he still had to make *Hajj*, he still had to pray, he still had to know how to pay *Zakât*, he still had to fast. So, even though he was the *khaleefah*, he still had to worship the king of the *khaleefahs*, the king of the kings, Allah (ﷻ). There is no way to fulfil that requirement of worship except through knowledge, by knowing the deen. Many people who have not tasted the sweetness of *Eemân* may wonder why somebody who has the status of a king would even care. He has money, he has power, he has status, all of the material things that he could wish for. But, those who

understand know that there is no true happiness and no real sense of peace except through the worship of Allah (ﷻ) because Allah (ﷻ) created us and He knows what is better for us than we do for ourselves. He is the one who informed us that it is through His remembrance that the hearts find tranquility. It is not through power, it is not through money, but it is through the remembrance of Allah (ﷻ) that the hearts find peace and tranquility. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿أَلَا بِذِكْرِ اللَّهِ تَطْمَئِنُّ الْقُلُوبُ﴾ [الرَّعَدُ: ٢٨]

“Is it not by the remembrance of Allah that the hearts find tranquility?”

And Allah (ﷻ) promised us that if we read the Quran, and if we follow its teachings, that we will not stray in this life, nor will we suffer in the hereafter. This is what he told our father, Adam, and our mother, Eve. Allah (ﷻ) said:

﴿فَمَنْ اتَّبَعَ هُدَايَ فَلَا يَضِلُّ وَلَا يَشْقَى﴾ [طه: ١٢٣]

“Whoever follows my guidance will not go astray, nor will he suffer any misery”

If you look at the beginning of those *âyât*, where Allah (ﷻ) is talking to Adam and eve. He says:

﴿قَالَ اهْبِطَا مِنْهَا جَمِيعًا بَعْضُكُمْ لِبَعْضٍ عَدُوٌّ فَإِمَّا يَأْتِيَنَّكُمْ مِنِّي هُدًى فَمَنِ اتَّبَعَ هُدَايَ فَلَا يَضِلُّ وَلَا يَشْقَى﴾ [طه: ١٢٣]

So He says to Adam and eve: “descend from it”

Descend from *Jannah*, because this is after *Shaytân* had tricked them into disobeying Allah (ﷻ).

“All of you together. Each one of you being an enemy to the other”

Meaning that Adam and Eve and their progeny are enemies to *Shaytân* and his progeny.

“And, if guidance should come to you from me, then whoever follows my guidance will not go astray, nor will he suffer”

Ibn Abbas (رضي الله عنه) said in the explanation of this *Ayah* that Allah (ﷻ) has guaranteed for the one who reads the Quran and follows its teachings, that he will not go astray, nor will he suffer in the hereafter. And this is from Ibn Abbas; the one about whom

the prophet (ﷺ) said:

«اللَّهُمَّ فَتِّهْ فِي الدِّينِ وَعَلِّمَهُ التَّأْوِيلَ»

«*Oh Allah give him understanding of the deen, and teach him the interpretation of the Quran*»

Allah (ﷻ) goes on to say after that:

﴿وَمَنْ أَعْرَضَ عَن ذِكْرِي فَإِنَّ لَهُ مَعِيشَةً ضَنْكًا﴾ [طه: ١٢٤]

“*And whoever turns away from my remembrance (i.e. the Quran, as many of the Mufasssireen have said), then he will have a very difficult life*”

He will find his heart will be tight. This person externally may be from the person who has the most blessings. He wears the finest clothes, and perhaps eats the best of food, and he has the greatest house and the fastest cars or whatever the situation may be. But, a person who turns away from the remembrance of Allah (ﷻ) will without a doubt be in an ongoing eternal struggle because his *fitrah*, the way that Allah (ﷻ) created him, his natural inclination is towards the worship of Allah (ﷻ). So, there is something in him that is constantly calling him to the worship of Allah (ﷻ). However, he has turned away from that, and because he turned away from that he will be in a constant struggle with himself. And so, he will find himself depressed and he will go to the doctor. The doctor will give him medicine for anxiety and depression and everything else, and he will find that it doesn't help him too much or he becomes dependent upon those drugs to constantly keep him in a state where he can't even think about Allah (ﷻ).

So, the person who turns away from Allah, Allah told us this in the Quran:

﴿وَمَنْ أَعْرَضَ عَن ذِكْرِي فَإِنَّ لَهُ مَعِيشَةً ضَنْكًا﴾ [طه: ١٢٤]

“*And whoever turns away from my remembrance will have a very difficult life*”

And then Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿وَنُخْشِرُهُ، يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ أَعْمَى﴾ [طه]

“*And we will raise him on the day of resurrection blind*”

That is he will be literally blind. He will say to Allah (ﷻ) as he is in this disgraced state:

﴿ قَالَ رَبِّ لِمَ حَشَرْتَنِي أَعْمَى وَقَدْ كُنْتُ بَصِيرًا ﴾ [طه: ١٢٥]

“Oh my lord, why have you raised me blind and I used to be able to see”

When I was in the *dunyâ*, I walked around like everybody else, I could see. Allah (ﷻ) answers him:

﴿ قَالَ كَذَلِكَ أَنْتَ أَيْدُنَا فَنَسِينَهَا ﴾ [طه: ١٢٦]

“It is just like when our *âyât* came to you; you forgot them and you left them”

﴿ وَكَذَلِكَ الْيَوْمَ نُنَسِي ﴾ [طه: ١٢٦]

“So, likewise, today you will be left and you will be forgotten”

And as the scholars say:

(الْجَزَاءُ مِنْ جِنْسِ الْعَمَلِ)

“The reward corresponds directly with the action”

So, this person who forgot Allah in this life will be forgotten on the day of resurrection, and this person who turned a blind eye to the revelation will be blind literally on the Day of Judgment.

The point here is that even though *Suleiman ibn ‘Abdulmalik* was a king and a he was *khaleefah* and he had everything that a person could want, he still had to worship Allah (ﷻ) and he still recognized that there will be no peace of mind for him except through worshipping Allah (ﷻ) properly.

The last benefit *in shâ’a Allahu Ta’âlâ* that we will mention from this story is that Suleiman, once recognizing the importance of knowledge, encouraged his sons to learn the deen and pursue knowledge. So, even though he had a great status and he was the *khaleefah*, [did] he want his sons to be doctors? No he wanted his sons to be scholars. He wanted them to be knowledgeable of the religion of Allah (ﷻ), without looking at the intention (he mentioned that he was humiliated, etc.). Without looking at his intention for wanting his sons to learn Islam, the Ummah is need of reviving

this advice, this *naṣeeḥah*, i.e. that we encourage our children to be scholars.

There are so many Muslims today that when they see their children are bright and intelligent, and for example are the best in their class, they take them away from the religious aspects. They say: you should be a doctor, you should be a dentist, you should be a pharmacist, or an engineer, or something like that. When they see that they are smart and intelligent, they encourage them to seek knowledge of these types of things. There is nothing wrong with studying medicine or pharmacology or any other beneficial science. As a matter of fact, some scholars have specifically noted that the knowledge of these secular sciences that benefit the Muslims is (*farḍ kifâyah*) for the Muslims, that it is a communal obligation, that some of the muslims have to study this. However, knowledge of the religion is (*farḍ ‘ayn*) obligatory upon each and every Muslim. Now, that doesn't mean that the details of the deen are obligatory on every Muslim but there is no doubt that there is a level of knowledge that every Muslim has to have. Every Muslim has to know how to pray. If a Muslim has money, then he has to know how to pay *Zakât*. Every Muslim has to know how to fast. Every Muslim who has the ability has to learn how to make *Hajj*. If a Muslim gets married then it is (*farḍ ‘ayn*), it is obligatory upon that Muslim to know the rights that his wife has upon him, and likewise for the woman to know the rights that her spouse has over her. What does that mean that it is obligatory? It means that the person who does not learn, but has the ability to do so, is sinning.

So, brothers, it is very important to revive this advice amongst ourselves, amongst our children and our brothers, that we encourage people to learn the knowledge of the deen because we absolutely and positively need scholars. We need scholars, brothers. Every land needs scholars because there are nuances and dynamics that are particular to each land that need people who are from that land, who understand the dynamics of the particular land, and who combine that understanding with a deep sophisticated knowledge of the religion of Allah (ﷻ), so that with the permission of Allah, they

will be the people who search for the solutions to the problems that the Muslims face. We can't leave this in the hands of mediocrity. If everybody that is smart and intelligent, if every child at the top of his class is pushed into secular sciences, who do we leave the study of the deen of Allah to? Okay, we have a doctor, he is excellent, and he is one *in shâ'a Allahu ta'âlâ* (Allah willing) who will help people become healthy physically. Who will help the souls and the hearts of the Muslims if we leave it in the hands of people who are under-achievers? There is no doubt that Allah (ﷻ) is going to aid his *deen*. The question is: will we be from amongst the people whom Allah (ﷻ) uses to aid it.

For you brothers who have already started upon a path of knowledge, some of you may be in the Islamic University of *Madeenah*, take the advice of *Suleiman ibn 'Abdulmalik* when he told his sons: do not be lethargic in the pursuit of knowledge. Strive hard and recognize that yes there are times when the path becomes difficult and there are times when you will question: is this the right path, but believe me that it is a path that leads to *Jannah*. So, stay on the path and recognize that the Ummah needs you and the Ummah needs scholars. For the brothers that have already started the path, don't suffice yourself with just taking a little bit from here and there. Try your best to be from among the future scholars of Islam.

Allah (ﷻ) in the Quran commands us to ask the people of knowledge. In another surah where Allah (ﷻ) highlights the virtue of knowledge, he begins the surah talking about his mercy. As a matter of fact, he begins the surah with his beautiful name (*Ar-Rahmân*). This surah is amazing that he starts it with (*Ar-Rahmân*), the Merciful, the name that indicates the great mercy of Allah (ﷻ) and the magnitude of his generosity and the vast nature of His mercy. Then, Allah (ﷻ) mentions the various manifestations of this mercy upon His creation throughout the surah. After each of those times He says:

﴿فَإِيَّاءِ الْآءِ رَبِّكُمْ أَتُكذِّبَانِ﴾ [الرَّحْمَن]

“Which of your Lord’s favors will you deny”

From the greatest manifestations of this mercy is knowledge, specifically knowledge of the Quran. What does Allah (ﷻ) say in the beginning of the *soorah*? Most of you memorize it.

﴿الرَّحْمَنُ ۙ (١) عَلَّمَ الْقُرْآنَ ۚ (٢)﴾ [الرَّحْمَن]

The first thing that Allah (ﷻ) mentions after mentioning His beautiful name is that “he taught the Quran”. That he taught people not only the words of the Quran but also the meanings of the Quran. The great scholar and *mufassir* ‘Abdurrahmân ibn Nâsir As-Si’di (رحمته الله) *ta’âlâ* said: the fact that Allah (ﷻ) has taught us the Quran:

(وَهَذَا أَعْظَمُ مَنَّةٍ وَرَحْمَةٍ رَحِمَ اللَّهُ بِهَا عِبَادَهُ)

“This is the greatest mercy and the greatest blessing that Allah (ﷻ) has bestowed upon his servants, that he taught them the Quran”

‘Abdurrahmân As-Si’di also says in his famous poem that deals with the legal maxims - For those of you who are students of knowledge who have not memorized:

(مَنْظُومَةُ الْقَوَاعِدِ الْفِقْهِيَّةِ)

The poem that deals with legal maxims by ‘Abdurrahmân As-Si’di, that is something I encourage you to do - in the introduction of this poem, he says:

(اعْلَمْ هُدَيْتَ أَنَّ أَعْظَمَ الْمِنَنِ عِلْمٌ يُزِيلُ الشَّكَّ عَنْكَ وَالذَّرْنَ)

“Know, may you be guided, that the best of virtue or the greatest of Allah (ﷻ)’s favors is knowledge that removes uncertainty (*shakk*) and impurities (*ad-daran*)”

So from the greatest benefits of knowledge is that it removes uncertainty and impurity, filth, from the heart. And what the word *shakk*, doubt, here is referring to is the disease of *shubuhât*, doubtful matters or misconceptions, misunderstandings, misinformation. And with the word *ad-daran*, filth or impurities, he is referring to the disease of *shahawât*, a person’s lowly desires. And every single disease that affects the heart of the child of Adam is from one of these two categories. The *Shaytân* enters upon the child of Adam from one of these two doors: either the door of

Shubhah, some uncertainty that he has about the information that Allah (ﷻ) has given us in the Quran, or from the door of *shahawât*, some desires that he has.

Shubhah causes a person to oppose something that Allah (ﷻ) or His messenger has informed us of. The *shahwah*, desire, causes him to do something that Allah (ﷻ) has prohibited or to refrain from something that Allah (ﷻ) has commanded him to do. So we have *shubhah* and *shahwah*.

I am going to ask a question to make sure that we understand the difference between the *shubhah* and the *shahwah*. The *shubhah* we are translating as: doubts, or uncertainties, or misunderstandings, and *shahwah* as desires. A person has some money, enough to buy a decent car. He goes to the showroom to buy the car and then he sees a luxury vehicle, with all the options. He doesn't have enough money to get the luxury car so he says: I really want that car, so I'll use the money that I have now as a down payment. I know that *ribâ*, interest, is haram but I can get a loan from the bank and then I will just pay off the rest of the car with the loan from the bank. So, he has done something that Allah (ﷻ) has prohibited. Is this considered to be *shahwah* or a *shubhah*? *shahwah*, he is following his desires.

Another person lives in a western country and wants to buy a house. He finds somebody that is going to give him a loan at a 2% interest rate, a small amount. Somebody else told him that Allah (ﷻ) says in the Quran:

﴿وَأَحَلَّ اللَّهُ الْبَيْعَ وَحَرَّمَ الرِّبَا﴾ [البقرة: ٢٧٥]

“Allah has made buying and selling permissible, but he has made *ribâ* haram”

He says: yes, but I read in the translation of Quran that *ribâ* is usury, and usury is not just any kind of interest, it is excessive interest. This here is a small amount of interest so there is no harm in doing so. So, he takes the loan. Is this a *shubhah* or a *shahwah*? This is a *shubhah*, a misunderstanding of the religion that needs to be cleared up.

The only cure for both *shubuhât* and *shahawât* is knowledge. The only cure for

both a person's uncertainties and following his base desires is knowledge because knowledge breeds *yaqeen* and *ṣabr*. It breeds certainty and it breeds patience. So, whoever has certainty then his certainty will serve as a shield or protector between him and the uncertainties and the misinformation and the misunderstandings. And whoever has *ṣabr*, whoever has that patience and perseverance, then he will refrain from things that Allah (ﷻ) has told him to refrain from, and he will also do the things that Allah (ﷻ) commanded him to do because he has patience. If a person attains these two qualities and is able to close the door on the *Shayṭân*, then he will reach a status in the deen that perhaps he didn't even aspire to even though he should. That is *Imâmah*, he will become a leader in the religion of Allah (ﷻ). Allah (ﷻ) told us in the Quran, and many of you hear this Ayah repeated over and over every Friday, in *soorat Al-Sajdah* where Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿وَجَعَلْنَا مِنْهُمْ أَيْمَةً يَهْدُونَ بِأَمْرِنَا﴾ [السَّجْدَةُ: ٢٤]

“And we made from amongst them imâms guiding by our commands”

﴿وَجَعَلْنَا مِنْهُمْ أَيْمَةً يَهْدُونَ بِأَمْرِنَا لَمَّا صَبَرُوا وَكَانُوا بِآيَاتِنَا يُوقِنُونَ﴾ [السَّجْدَةُ]

Allah (ﷻ) made them Imams when they had *ṣabr*, patience, and when they were certain with the *âyât* of Allah (ﷻ). So, the person who has the ability, who seeks the knowledge that breeds certainty and patience, will find that his heart is filled with beneficial knowledge that will not have any place for *shubuhât* or *shahawât*. Knowledge of the revelation, and revelation is not only the Quran, it is the Quran and the *sunnah* of the prophet (ﷺ) because the prophet (ﷺ) did not speak of his own desire, as Allah (ﷻ) said:

﴿وَمَا يَنْطِقُ عَنِ الْهَوَىٰ (٢) إِنْ هُوَ إِلَّا وَحْيٌ يُوحَىٰ (٤)﴾ [النَّجْم]

“It is only revelation that has been revealed to him”

So, knowledge of the revelation is what gives life to the heart. That is why Allah (ﷻ) said in the Quran:

﴿يَأْتِيهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا اسْتَجِيبُوا لِلَّهِ وَلِلرَّسُولِ إِذَا دَعَاكُمْ لِمَا يُحْيِيكُمْ﴾ [الأنفال: ٢٤]

“Oh you who believe, respond to Allah and to his messenger when he calls you to that which gives you life”

Meaning that: everything that Allah (ﷻ) sends down and everything that He taught the prophet (ﷺ) and the prophet conveyed to us - all the revelation - brings life.

﴿وَأَعْلَمُوا أَنَّهُ اللَّهُ يَحُولُ بَيْنَ الْمَرْءِ وَقَلْبِهِ﴾ [الأنفال: ٢٤]

“And know that Allah (ﷻ) intervenes between a person and his heart”

If a person does not respond to Allah and his messenger, he should fear some type of *fitnah*, he should fear that Allah (ﷻ) will come between him and his heart. Many of the scholars of *tafseer* mention in this particular *âyah* that it is upon the believer to constantly make the *du'âa*:

«يَا مُقَلِّبَ الْقُلُوبِ ثَبِّتْ قَلْبِي عَلَى دِينِكَ»

“Oh tuner of the hearts, make my heart firm upon your deen”

Because you don't want Allah (ﷻ) to come between you and your heart, and one of the reasons is that a person does not respond to the call of Allah and his messenger (ﷺ) when they call us to that which gives us life.

There are other *âyat* in the Quran that indicate that Allah's revelation is what brings life to the heart:

Student reads:

﴿الَمْ يَأْنِ لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَنْ تَخْشَعَ قُلُوبُهُمْ لِذِكْرِ اللَّهِ وَمَا نَزَلَ مِنَ الْحَقِّ وَلَا يَكُونُوا كَالَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ مِنْ قَبْلُ فَطَالَ عَلَيْهِمُ الْأَمَدُ فَقَسَتْ قُلُوبُهُمْ وَكَثِيرٌ مِنْهُمْ فَنَسِئُوا ﴿١٦﴾ أَعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ يُحْيِي الْأَرْضَ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَا قَدْ بَيَّنَّا لَكُمُ الْآيَاتِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَعْقِلُونَ ﴿١٧﴾﴾ [الحديد]

Wallahi we shouldn't just listen to the Quran without pondering. Ponder over these *âyat*. In it you will find some subtleties from pondering the book of Allah (ﷻ) that you won't find anywhere else obviously because it is the speech of Allah. Allah (ﷻ) says in these *âyat*:

“Has not the time come for those who have believed that their hearts should become humbly submissive (that there should be *khushoo* ' in their hearts) at the

remembrance of Allah and what has come down of the truth”

The remembrance of Allah here, as many of the scholars of *tafseer* say, is the Quran, so that their hearts should become submissive and humble when hearing the book of Allah (ﷻ).

“And let them not be like those who were given the book, or the scripture, from before, and a long time passed, the time of heedlessness passed over them, and so their hearts became hard”

And when Allah (ﷻ) talks about a hard heart in the Quran, he is talking about a dead heart.

“And many of them are openly disobedient”

Allah (ﷻ) then says:

﴿اعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ يُحْيِي الْأَرْضَ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَا﴾ [الحديد: ١٧]

“Know that Allah brings life back to the earth after it has died”

What is the relationship between this ayah and the previous one? *In shâ'a Allah* we will talk about that in a second. And Allah says:

“And we have made clear to you the signs, so that you may reflect and so that you may understand”

If you reflect over that, Allah (ﷻ) is telling us here that just like Allah brings life back to the earth by sending rain down from the sky, that land that is barren, it is dry and hard and it doesn't have any plants coming out of it, Allah (ﷻ) sends down rain from the sky and brings life back to earth. Likewise, Allah brings life back to the hard hearts through the revelation that he sends down from the heavens. If we reflect over these *âyât*, then we see that it is the knowledge of revelation that brings life back to the heart. So, knowledge is what nourishes the heart the same way that food nourishes the body, and knowledge is what serves as a barrier between you and the *Shaytân*.

Perhaps the last thing we will talk about as it relates to the virtue of knowledge is

to look very briefly at the first story in the Quran. What is the first story in the Quran? It is the story of the creation of Adam. *Wallahi*, if you ponder over these *âyât*, *In shâa Allah* there will be no doubt left in your mind that the virtue of knowledge is the virtue that Allah (ﷻ) gave to Adam from the beginning. It is the quality and the trait that Allah (ﷻ) gave to Adam that distinguished him from the Angels even. So, let us listen to these *âyât in shâa Allahu ta'âlâ* from the beginning of *sooratul-Baqarah* and then we will go over it little by little to digest the meaning. Digest the meaning in the sense that *in shâa Allah* you never look at this story again in the same way that you looked at it now. In other words, that once you hear the explanation *in shâa Allah*, every time you read it after that you will be thinking about the *tafseer* of these *âyât* by the will of Allah. Go on:

﴿وَإِذْ قَالَ رَبُّكَ لِلْمَلٰئِكَةِ اِنِّيْ جَاعِلٌ فِى الْاَرْضِ خَلِيْفَةً قَالُوْۤا اَنْجَعِلْ فِيْهَا مَنْ يُّفْسِدُ فِيْهَا وَيَسْفِكُ الدِّمَآءَ وَنَحْنُ نُسَبِّحُ بِحَمْدِكَ وَنُقَدِّسُ لَكَ قَالَ اِنِّيْۤ اَعْلَمُ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿٣٠﴾﴾ [البقرة]

We will take it verse by verse *in shâa Allah*. Allah (ﷻ) here begins with the story of the creation of Adam. He says:

“So, remember when we said to the angels that we are going to make a *khaleefah* in the earth. The angels said to Allah (ﷻ): are you going to put on earth someone who is going to cause corruption and cause bloodshed?”

﴿وَ نَحْنُ نُسَبِّحُ بِحَمْدِكَ وَنُقَدِّسُ لَكَ﴾ [البقرة: ٣٠]

“And we are the ones who sing your praises and sanctify you”

Allah (ﷻ) responded by saying

﴿اِنِّيْۤ اَعْلَمُ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُوْنَ﴾ [البقرة]

“I know that which you don't know”

So, Allah (ﷻ) qualifies the decision to put a *khaleefah* in the earth by His knowledge. And then he says:

﴿وَعَلَّمَ آدَمَ الْاَسْمَآءَ كُلَّهَا ثُمَّ عَرَضَهُمْ عَلَى الْمَلٰئِكَةِ فَقَالَ اَنْبِئُوْنِىْ بِاَسْمَآءِ هٰۤؤُلَآءِ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ صٰدِقِيْنَ﴾ [البقرة]

He says:

“So, he taught Adam the names, all of them, and then he showed them to the angels”

Notice, what did he do with Adam? He taught him, ‘allama, ‘ilm = knowledge. He gave him the knowledge of the names of everything, and then he showed these things to the angels:

“and He said: inform me of their names if you are truthful”

﴿قَالُوا سُبْحَانَكَ لَا عِلْمَ لَنَا إِلَّا مَا عَلَّمْتَنَا إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْعَلِيمُ الْحَكِيمُ﴾ [البقرة: ٣٣]

“They said: exalted are you, Allah (ﷻ), we don’t have any knowledge except for the knowledge that you have given us. Indeed, you are the Knowledgeable and the Wise”
So, here the angels are praising Allah (ﷻ) through his name *Al-’Aleem*, the one who is the All-Knowledgeable, and *Al-Hakeem*, the one who is All-Wise.

﴿قَالَ يَفَادُمُ أَنْبِئْتَهُمْ بِأَسْمَائِهِمْ﴾ [البقرة: ٣٣]

“So then, He told Adam: tell them the names of these things”

That is an aspect that made Adam superior in knowledge to the angels.

﴿فَلَمَّا أَنْبَأَهُمْ بِأَسْمَائِهِمْ قَالَ أَلَمْ أَقُلْ لَكُمْ إِنِّي أَعْلَمُ الْغَيْبَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَأَعْلَمُ مَا تُبْدُونَ وَمَا كُنْتُمْ تَكْتُمُونَ﴾ [البقرة: ٣٣]

“So, when Adam informed them of the names of everything, Allah (ﷻ) said to them: did I not tell you that I am the one who knows the unseen affairs of the heavens and the earth, and I know everything that you reveal and everything that you conceal”

I know the things that you conceal and reveal. It is all going back to knowledge. And then right after Allah (ﷻ) mentions the creation of Adam, and that he is going to put Adam on earth, and that he has given him this virtue and favor of knowledge, he then commands the angels to prostrate to Adam as a way of honoring Adam for the knowledge that he had.

What I want you to do is keep this in mind. This conversation, if you will, between Allah (ﷻ) and the angels about Adam. Think about that when you think about the way that Allah (ﷻ) honors the children of Adam who have gathered for the sake of knowledge. Allah (ﷻ) honors them and mentions them to the angels. Actually Allah (ﷻ) brags about the children of Adam who have come together for the purpose

of knowledge. He brags about them to the angels.

Abu Sa'eed Al-Khodry (رضي الله عنه) mentioned that *Mu'awiyah ibn abi-Sufyan* (رضي الله عنه) went to the *masjid* and saw people sitting in a circle, meaning: *halaqah*. *Mu'awiyah* said to them:

(مَا أَجَلَسَكُمُ؟)

“What is it that has caused you to sit here?”

Why are you sitting here? They said:

(جَلَسْنَا نَذْكُرُ اللَّهَ)

“We have sat here to remember Allah”

That is it. So, *Mu'awiyah* said to them:

(اللَّهُ مَا أَجَلَسَكُمُ إِلَّا ذَاكَ؟)

“You swear by Allah that is the only reason that you are sitting here (i.e. to remember Allah?)”

They said:

(وَاللَّهُ مَا أَجَلَسْنَا إِلَّا ذَاكَ)

“We swear by Allah that we are only sitting here to remember Allah, for that reason”

Mu'awiyah then said (رضي الله عنه):

“I have not asked you to make an oath because I am accusing you of lying, but indeed the prophet (ﷺ) entered the masjid and saw people sitting in a circle. The prophet (ﷺ) then asked them: why are you sitting here? They said:”

(جَلَسْنَا نَذْكُرُ اللَّهَ وَنَحْمَدُهُ عَلَىٰ مَا هَدَانَا لِلْإِسْلَامِ وَمَنْ بِهِ عَلَيْنَا)

“We are sitting here to remember Allah and the favor that he has bestowed upon us by guiding us to Islam”

These are the *Ṣahâbah* sitting in the *masjid* remembering Allah. Here is a side point that remembering Allah here is not sitting in the *masjid* saying: Allah, Allah, Allah..., or mentioning some of Allah's names. They are remembering the favor that Allah (ﷻ) has bestowed upon them by guiding them to Islam, by guiding their hearts,

and what a great virtue that is. The prophet (ﷺ) said to them:

«آلله مَا أَجَلَسَكُم إِلَّا ذَاكَ؟»

“By Allah, you have only sat here for that reason?”

And they said to the prophet (ﷺ):

(وَالله مَا أَجَلَسْنَا إِلَّا ذَاكَ)

“By Allah, we have only sat here for that purpose”

So the prophet (ﷺ) said to them:

«أَمَا إِنِّي لَمْ أَسْتَحْلِفْكُمْ تَهْمَةً لَكُمْ، وَلَكِنْ أَنَا نَبِيٌّ فَأَخْبَرَنِي أَنَّ اللَّهَ يُبَاهِي بِكُمْ الْمَلَائِكَةَ»

“I have not asked you to swear by Allah (ﷻ) because I am accusing you of lying, but Jibreel came to me and told me that Allah brags about you all to the angels”

This hadith is collected by Imam Muslim. So, what we see is that when the children of Adam come together to pursue that quality that their father was given, the quality of ‘ilm, then Allah (ﷻ) mentions them to the angels the same way that Adam was mentioned to the angels. *Subhâna Allah*, this is a very deep concept that Allah (ﷻ) will actually mention his servants, the weak human beings, to the angels. But this is what Allah (ﷻ) has promised us. This is what the prophet (ﷺ) has promised for those who go out and pursue knowledge as the prophet (ﷺ) said:

«مَنْ سَلَكَ طَرِيقًا يَلْتَمِسُ فِيهِ عِلْمًا سَهَّلَ اللَّهُ لَهُ بِهِ طَرِيقًا إِلَى الْجَنَّةِ»

“Whoever traverses a path of knowledge, Allah (ﷻ) will make easy for him the path to jannah”

Right after that in the same hadith, the prophet (ﷺ) says:

«وَمَا اجْتَمَعَ قَوْمٌ فِي بَيْتٍ مِنْ بُيُوتِ اللَّهِ يَتْلُونَ كِتَابَ اللَّهِ، وَيَتَدَارَسُونَهُ بَيْنَهُمْ إِلَّا نَزَلَتْ عَلَيْهِمُ السَّكِينَةُ، وَعَشِيَّتْهُمْ الرَّحْمَةُ، وَحَفَّتْهُمُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ، وَذَكَرَهُمُ اللَّهُ فِيمَنْ عِنْدَهُ»

The prophet (ﷺ) says:

“And there is not a people who gather in one of the houses from the house of Allah reciting the book of Allah and studying it among themselves except that tranquility descends upon them, and the mercy of Allah (ﷻ) penetrates the gathering, and the

angels surround the gathering, and Allah (ﷻ) mentions them (the people of the gathering) to those who are close to him (the angels) ”

So, there are four rewards for everyone who comes to the house of Allah (ﷻ), who sits down in a circle of knowledge. There are four different distinct rewards that person gains, and four benefits that person gains:

- 1- The first is that *sakeenah* comes down. Allah (ﷻ) sends down tranquility. And as you sit in this type of gathering, perhaps something was bothering you before. When you sit here *subhâna Allah* it is like it goes away, because there is a tranquility that overcomes the gathering.
- 2- And Allah (ﷻ)’s mercy penetrates the gathering. Just from a person sitting here, his sins are being forgiven, as many of the scholars say that: there is no way Allah’s mercy penetrates the gathering except that it removes the sins.
- 3- And the angels surround the gathering. So, every gathering to remember Allah (ﷻ), including this gathering by the permission of Allah (ﷻ), has angels surrounding it.
- 4- And Allah (ﷻ) mentions the people of the gathering to those who are with him. Here is a really subtle point because many of us don’t really ponder over what that means. We like to be recognized by people for some accomplishment. Maybe you got a degree or a promotion at work or whatever the situation may be, some accomplishment that you made, or something good that you did. And people recognize you for that. They call you and say that we’ve heard that such and such happened, congratulations. Maybe they print your name in the paper, or mass emails go out. So, it is something that you might feel happy about because the people are mentioning you in a good light to other people. What about Allah (ﷻ) when he mentions you to the angels.

(بِالْمَثَلِ الْأَعْلَى ﴿النَّحْل: ٦٠﴾)

So, these are the things that we should strive for *in shâa Allahu ta’âlâ*, and we

should recognize that being here right now in the masjid of the prophet (ﷺ). The masjid that is second only to al-masjid al-haram. The masjid about which the prophet (ﷺ) said:

“praying in it is better than a thousand times the prayer anywhere else except for al-masjid al-haram”

That Allah (ﷻ) has guided you to be here is a tremendous blessing, *wallâhi*, because the distractions are many. The distractions from the worship of Allah (ﷻ) and especially from seeking knowledge are many. As a matter of fact, it is historically unparalleled. We live in an era that is historically unparalleled when it comes to distractions. People of the past if they wanted to be distracted on a major level, if they wanted to be entertained, they had to leave the house and go somewhere. Go to a gathering, a theatre, a cinema, or something, so that they may be distracted or entertained. And then, the television was invented and people brought television into their homes to the point that a person could sit in front of the idiot box for hours on end and be entertained and never have to go anywhere. He could just sit down and entertain himself, and distract himself from the remembrance of Allah (ﷻ).

That was at the beginning when it was black and white with a couple of channels. Then, the satellite was introduced. Instead of watching TV for two or three hours, people began to watch TV for four or five hours a day. We seek refuge in Allah (ﷻ). How can a person watch TV more than they read the Quran, and more than they pray, combined? *Subhâna Allah*.

But that wasn't enough for *Shaytân* to take the servants of Allah (ﷻ) off the path of Allah. So, it went from leaving the house to staying in the house to, after that, we now have smart phones and tablets. Wherever you might be, on the go, on the bus, in the bathroom, you can have this thing entertaining you, playing games or whatever, or watching things, or listening to things. At work, when your boss is not watching, or in school, when the teacher is not looking, you play on the phone. The distractions

of this era are unparalleled. So, the fact that Allah (ﷻ) has guided us away from these distractions to the masjid of the prophet (ﷺ) is a tremendous blessing that deserves to be thanked.

We thank Allah (ﷻ) for this blessing. And if you are guided to thanking Allah (ﷻ) for that blessing, then you thank Allah for having thanked Him for the blessing. It creates a perpetual cycle of thanking Allah (ﷻ) because if you are thankful to Allah (ﷻ), He will give you an increase. So, we use this time to refocus and to be away from the distractions, and to hope for Allah (ﷻ)'s guidance to that which is pleasing to him, and to get understanding of the religion of Allah (ﷻ). Hopefully, this is a sign that Allah (ﷻ) wants good for us, because the prophet (ﷺ) said:

«مَنْ يُرِدِ اللَّهُ بِهِ خَيْرًا يُفَقِّهْهُ فِي الدِّينِ»

“Whoever Allah wants good for, he will give him understanding of the religion”

After that introduction, if it can be called an introduction, these sittings *in shâa Allahu ta'âlâ* are going to be dedicated to the study of a very important book. A book that has spread throughout the world, not only the Muslim world but the world in general. It is probably one of the most famous books amongst the Muslims, maybe after the Quran. The book that these lessons are going to be dedicated to is extremely important. It is a book that because of its importance and its comprehensive nature, no Muslim, especially a student of knowledge, can do without. Many of you have heard about the book already. Perhaps some children have memorized the book. For centuries, scholars have recommended that this be the book that you start with. Whether you start the path of seeking knowledge, or whether it is that you just want a general study of Islam. This book is the “Forty Hadith” of *imâm an-nawawy* (ﷺ). What is the “forty hadith” of *imâm an-nawawy*? Is it “forty hadith” that he narrated himself or what exactly is “forty hadith” of *imâm an-nawawy*?

It is important for us to know the book that we are going to study, so that we know how to study. “Forty Hadith” of *imâm an-nawawy* is a compilation of *ahâdeeth*. The

origin of it is that there was a great scholar of hadith by the name of *Ibn-Aṣ-Ṣalâḥ*. He used to have sittings of hadith. In those sittings, he noticed that there were some *ahâdeeth* that were very comprehensive, or they were foundations of an aspect of the religion of Islam. So, he gathered them all in one place. They were known as:

(الْأَحَادِيثُ الْكُلِّيَّةُ)

Or the comprehensive *ahâdeeth*. There were twenty-six hadith. *Yahyâ ibn sharaf an-nawawy* (رَحِمَهُ اللهُ), a great scholar, came along and looked at those *ahâdeeth* and realized that there were other *ahâdeeth* that should be added to these twenty-six. So, he added sixteen hadith. The number became forty-two, so why is it called “the forty hadith”? Well, they rounded down to make it easy for people to say. So, we say the forty hadith instead of saying the forty-two hadith. It is actually forty-two hadith. Some of you are familiar with the book, you may have been confused at one point or another why it is called the forty hadith and there are actually forty-two hadith.

His intention was to collect all of the *ahâdeeth* where the scholars have said about that particular hadith:

(مَدَارُ الدِّينِ عَلَيْهِ)

“*That the religion of Islam revolves around this hadith*”

Or perhaps they said that this hadith is:

(نِصْفُ الدِّينِ)

“*half of the deen*”

or a third of the deen, or a fourth of the deen. All of these are actually part of the collection of *al-imâm An-nawawy*.

These *ahâdeeth* have extreme importance because they serve as the foundation for the religion. Every Muslim, not just the student of knowledge, his highest aspiration should be to understand the revelation. That is the speech of Allah (ﷻ) and the *sunnah* of the prophet (ﷺ), because this in fact was one of the objectives behind Allah (ﷻ) sending the prophet as is mentioned in many ayat in the Quran. For

example in *soorat al-jumu'ah*, Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿هُوَ الَّذِي بَعَثَ فِي الْأُمِّيِّينَ رَسُولًا مِنْهُمْ يَتْلُو عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتِهِ وَيُزَكِّيهِمْ وَيُعَلِّمُهُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَإِنْ كَانُوا مِنْ قَبْلُ لَفِي ضَلَالٍ مُبِينٍ﴾ [الجمعة]

“He is the one who sent among the unlettered (those who have not received scripture before, the Arabs) a messenger from amongst them. He recites the *âyât* and he purifies them and he teaches them the book and he teaches them the *hikmah* (wisdom)”

Al-imâm As-Shafi'y (رحمته الله) said: anytime you see: the book and the wisdom, Allah is talking about the Quran and the *sunnah*. The book being the Quran and the wisdom being the *sunnah* of the messenger (ﷺ). And notice that there's no repetition. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿يَتْلُو عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتِهِ﴾ [الجمعة: ٢]

“He recites to them the verses”

And He also says that “he teaches them the book”. So, the recitation is different than the teaching. The prophet (ﷺ) recited the *âyât*, but he didn't just stop at conveying the words, he also taught the meanings of the Quran. He taught them to the *ṣaḥabah*. The *ṣaḥabah* took those meanings and they taught them to the *tâbi'een* (followers). This is what the scholars mean when they say:

(فَهُمُ السَّلَفُ)

Understand Islam the way that the *ṣaḥabah* understood Islam from the prophet (ﷺ) who taught them directly as Allah commanded him to do in the Quran.

There are other *âyât* that indicate the same meaning, but the point is that it is therefore the highest aspiration of every Muslim to understand the revelation. So, by studying these *ahâdeeth in shâa Allahu ta'âlâ*, the forty hadith of *al-imâm An-nawawî*, we are also going to study by the permission of Allah the eight hadith that *Ibn Rajab* added to those forty two. Forty two plus eight is fifty. And he explained them in a tremendous book called:

(جَامِعُ الْعُلُومِ وَالْحِكْمِ)

“The Compendium of Knowledge and Wisdom”

And it is as its name says. It is an amazing book by *Ibn Rajab*. It is without a doubt the most expansive and the best explanation of the forty *ahâdeeth* of *al-imâm An-nawawy*. So, *in shâa Allahu ta'âlâ*, our study is going to be on Saturdays, Mondays, and Wednesdays between *Maghrib* and ‘*Ishâa*, after *Maghrib* immediately by the permission of Allah.

In shâa Allahu ta'âlâ in the next lecture, we are going to begin with the introduction of *al-imâm An-nawawy* along with some of the other important aspects of the forty hadith.

وَاللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ، وَصَلَّى اللَّهُ وَسَلَّم وَبَارَكَ عَلَى نَبِيِّنَا مُحَمَّدٍ، سُبْحَانَكَ اللَّهُمَّ وَبِحَمْدِكَ، أَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ، أَسْتَغْفِرُكَ
وَأَتُوبُ إِلَيْكَ.

