

Al Hikmah

The Wisdom

Listening Attentively - A Requisite for 'Ilm and Hidāyah Ḥaḍrat Mawlānā Muhammad Saleem Dhorat ḥafīzahullāh

The great muḥaddith and faqīh, Sufyān Ibn 'Uyaynah ؓ states:

The first step towards acquiring 'ilm is istimā' i.e. listening attentively, then to understand, then to memorise/remember, then to act upon it and propagate.

The importance of listening with full attention is the first step and an essential requisite for success in acquiring 'ilm, which is the prerequisite to acting according to the wishes of the Creator. It is for this reason Allāh ﷻ used the word istimā' (listening with intent) instead of sam' (merely to listen with or without intention), followed by the word inṣāt (to become silent), when stating the adab of listening to the Qur'ān in the following verse:

When the Qur'ān is recited, listen to it attentively and be silent, so that you may be showered with mercy. (7:204)

Allāh ﷻ has promised to bestow His Mercy upon those who listen attentively, which will manifest in the form of the ability to abstain from wrong and engage in good deeds. Allāh ﷻ states:

..those who listen to the word attentively (of Allāh ﷻ and His Rasūl ﷺ), and follow (it, knowing that it is) the best of it (of all speech). These are the ones whom Allāh ﷻ has guided, and these are the ones who possess (true) intelligence (wisdom). (39:18)

The importance of istimā' can be further understood by how Allāh ﷻ addressed Mūsā ؑ when sending revelation to him. Allāh ﷻ states:

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THE BLESSING OF DAUGHTERS

Children are no doubt a great gift from Almighty Allāh ﷻ to all parents. Parents must think of their children as such treasures that all the wealth and material resources are worthless when compared to one's children. We, as parents, should thank and be grateful to Almighty Allāh ﷻ for blessing us with children whether they are boys or girls.

Today, it is quite disheartening to see that some parents rejoice when the newborn child is a male and show their dissatisfaction when the child is a female. But, this should not be the attitude. Islām does not condone this type of behavior, as such was the manner of the parents in the time of ignorance.

In pre-Islāmic times, the Arabs used to be disheartened and annoyed with the birth of girls, so that a father, when informed his wife had given birth to a girl, said, "By Allāh she is not as blissful as a son; her defense is crying and her care is but stealing!"

He meant she could not defend her father and her family except by screaming and crying, not by fighting and carrying arms. She also cannot be good to them and care for them except by taking from her husband's money to give to her family. Their traditions allowed the father to bury his daughter alive for actual poverty, or for expected poverty, or out of fear of disgrace she might bring upon them when she grew up. In that context, the Qur'ān says, denouncing and derogating them:

"And when the girl-child who was buried alive is asked. Upon what sin was she killed for."
[Surah al-Takwīr, Verses 8-9]

The Qur'ān also describes the condition of fathers when daughters were born:

"And when one among of them receives the glad tidings of a daughter, his face turns dark, and he remains seething. He hides himself from people because of the (self-presumed) bad news given to him (and wonders): Shall he keep it despite the disgrace (he will face in the society), or put it away into dust? In fact, evil is what they decide. [Surah al-Naḥl, Verse 58-59]

The Qur'ān led an uncompromising campaign against those cruel people who kill children-whether male or female. Allāh ﷻ says in the Qur'ān:

"Indeed ruined are those who slay their children out of senseless ignorance and forbid the sustenance which Allāh ﷻ has bestowed upon them, in order to fabricate lies against Allāh ﷻ; they have undoubtedly gone astray and not attained the Path." [Surah al-An'ām, Verse 140]

And Allāh Almighty says:

"And do not kill your children, fearing poverty; We shall provide sustenance to them as well as to you; indeed killing them is a great mistake." [Surah Banī 'Isrā'īl, Verse 31]

Some ancient laws gave the father the right to sell his daughter if he wished; while others allowed him to hand her to another man who would either kill her or own her if the father killed the other man's daughter.

When Islām was revealed, it decreed a daughter – like a son – was a gift from Allāh ﷻ, to be granted to whomever Allāh ﷻ wishes of His worshipers:

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“For Allāh ﷻ only is the kingship of the heavens and the earth; He creates whatever He wills; He may bestow daughters to whomever He wills, and sons to whomever He wills. Or may combine them, the sons and daughters; and may make barren whomever He wills; indeed He is All Knowing, Able.” [Surah al-Shūrā, Verses 49-50]

The Prophet ﷺ of Islām made Paradise the recompense of every father who conducts himself well with his daughters, has patience in raising them, provides their moral education, and observes Allāh’s ﷻ commands concerning them until they come of age. The Prophet ﷺ made the place of the father in Paradise next to him. Ḥaḍrat Anas ؓ reported that the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said,

“Whoever brings up two girls till they reach the age of puberty, he and I will come on the Day of Resurrection like this,” (and he joined his blessed fingers.) (At-Tirmidhī)

The beloved Prophet ﷺ has stated that,

“When a boy is born, then he brings one Nūr (light) and when a girl is born, then she brings two Nūrs.”
(By: Jamiat.org.za)

Continued in *Al-Ḥikmah Volume 2 Issue 1*

Du‘ā for the returning Ḥājī

Say the following du‘ā when meeting the ḥājī after his/her return from the sacred journey:

قَبْلِ اللَّهِ حَجَّكَ وَ عَفَّرَ ذَنْبَكَ وَ أَخْلَفَ نَفَقَتَكَ

(الأوسط للطبراني و عمل اليوم و الليلة لابن السني)

Qabilallāhu ḥajjaka wa ghafara dhambaka wa akh-lafa nafaqataka.

May Allāh accept your ḥajj, forgive your sins, and recompense your expenses. (At-Ṭabrānī)

Questions & Answers

Q If a person, after performing wuḍū is unsure if he passed wind or is unable to feel the passing of wind; will his wuḍū be nullified?

A Doubt does not nullify one's wuḍū. (*Fatāwā Dārul 'Ulūm: vol. 1, p. 143*)

Q Does injecting medicine, blood, or glucose nullify one's wuḍū?

A The wuḍū is not nullified if the injection does not cause the discharge of blood or pus from the body. However, if the blood is being drawn out of the body through a needle, the wuḍū will be nullified. (*Muntakhabāt Nizāmul Fatāwā: vol. 1, p. 44*)

Q If one always performs masaḥ on only one-fourth of his head during wuḍū, is his wuḍū imperfect? If yes, does this imperfection affect his ṣalāh?

A This is showing negligence towards an act of sunnah. It affects one's ṣalāh to the extent that it makes it's validity arguable. Leaving this sunnah will cause imperfection in purity because of which, leading prayer is undesirable in some cases. (*Imdādul Fatāwā New Edition: vol. 1, p. 36-37*)

Q Is it mandatory or just desirable to wash the hair of a thick beard in wuḍū? And is it compulsory to get water into the roots of a thick beard, or to simply wipe it with wet hands?

A The text of Al-Durrul Mukhtār reads: Washing the whole beard is obligatory according to the sound, preferable and most adopted opinion. Every opinion against it is 'taken back' as stated in badā'i. (Al-Durrul Mukhtār) The phrase 'Every opinion against it' refers to the opinion enjoining to wipe the whole beard, its one-fourth, one third or just the part of the hair touching the skin, or to wash one-fourth or one-third of the beard. (*Fatāwā Dārul 'Ulūm: vol. 1, p. 26*)

The Story of Making Assumptions

One fine day, a bus driver went to the bus garage, started his bus, and drove off along the route. No problems for the first few stops – a few people got on, a few got off, and things went generally well.

At the next stop, however, a big hulk of a guy got on, six foot eight, built like a wrestler, arms hanging down to the ground. He glared at the driver and said, “Big John doesn’t pay!” and sat down at the back.

Did I mention that the driver was five foot three, thin, and basically meek? Well, he was. Naturally, he didn’t argue with Big John, but he wasn’t happy about it. The next day the same thing happened – Big John got on again, made a show of refusing to pay, and sat down. And the next day, and the next.

This grated on the bus driver, who started losing sleep over the way Big John was taking advantage of him. Finally, he couldn't stand it no longer and so he signed up for body building courses, karate, judo, and all that good stuff.

By the end of the summer, he had become quite strong; what’s more, he felt really good about himself.

So on the next Monday, when Big John once again got on the bus and said, “Big John doesn’t pay!” The driver stood up, glared back at the passenger, and screamed, “And why not?”

With a surprised look on his face, Big John replied, “Big John has a bus pass.”

MORAL / LESSON:

The moral of this incident/story is quite self evident. However, it is a lesson that many of us seem to overlook and disregard in the many activities and chores of our life.

We learn from this incident that a person should not be hasty in making assumptions and judging a situation or an individual from what seems to be the apparent.

It is essential that a Muslim assumes the best of his fellow human being and gives him the benefit of the doubt. If possible, one should allow the fellow human being to explain himself as to clear any doubts one may have.

Our Nabī ﷺ has stated that being hasty is from Shayṭān whilst steady composure is from Allāh ﷻ. (At-Tirmidhī)

In the same manner, ‘Ulamā have stated that if there is a single reason for doubt in a matter relating to a person then that doubt should have an effect on the decision that is made.

In conclusion, one should take all factors into consideration and avoid hastiness in judging an individual. Instead, one should try to make the matter clear as to avoid placing false accusations on anyone.

JazākAllāhu Khairan to Mawlāna Zain for writing up a moral for the story.

Did you know...

While the Chinese invented paper sometime before the 2nd century B.C., Muslims were the first to mass-produce paper on an intercontinental scale, developing a culture dependent on its abundance. As the price of paper dropped, literacy rose and booksellers and libraries became integral parts of every Muslim city.
-Wilkinson, Philips. 2002. Islam

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I have chosen you (for prophethood), so listen attentively to what is revealed. (20:13)

The commentators of the Qur'ān have mentioned that when Mūsā ؑ was commanded that he should listen attentively to what is revealed to him, he stood on a rock, leaning against another, placed his right hand over his left, dropped his chin on his chest and stood listening attentively. (*Tafsīr al-Qurṭbī*)

From the above it is clear how important it is to listen attentively when seeking knowledge or listening to a discourse. Only those people will genuinely benefit who listen attentively with sound understanding.

How to Listen Attentively

The pious predecessors have defined the term *istimā'* in detail. Wahb Ibn Munabbih ؑ further explains the essence of *istimā'* by stating that it comprises of the following:

a. Keeping the body motionless.

A person should not engage any part of his body in anything whilst listening. He should become motionless. Fidgeting, playing around with clothes and other such actions dilute the concentration one needs when listening to religious discourses and lessons. The Saḥābah ؓ, when in the company of Rasūlullāh ﷺ, would sit so still that they were described with the phrase, "as if birds were sitting on their heads." If a bird was to sit on a person and he desired that it does not fly away, he will need to be extremely still. This was the condition of the Saḥābah ؓ whilst sitting in the company of Rasūlullāh ﷺ and listening to him.

b. Lowering the gaze.

In essence, lowering the gaze means that one should not be distracted by anything and be totally focused towards the lesson being imparted. Hence, a person needs to abstain from looking here and

there. Focussing in a manner which will prevent one from being distracted is essential to listening attentively. This can be achieved by either looking down or at the speaker. Furthermore, it portrays interest to the speaker which will further enhance the quality of delivery.

c. Attention of the ears.

During the discourse or lesson, a person should lend his ears only to the speaker.

d. Attention of the mind.

Whilst listening, the mind should also be alert and attentive. Being preoccupied or thinking about other things will be a hindrance in giving the required attention. It is for this reason students are advised to disengage from all such activities and devices which occupy the mind.

e. Firm intention to act.

If a person does not intend to act upon the knowledge being imparted, his attention will not always be completely focussed. Having a firm intention to practice will motivate a person to focus on everything being said.

When a person adopts such a manner of listening then he will fulfil the requisites of *istimā'* and gain the Pleasure of Allāh ﷻ. Allāh ﷻ will in return, grant him the correct understanding of knowledge and enlighten his heart with a special Nūr. Consequently, he will become from those who have been guided and granted a deep level of understanding, i.e. wisdom, as stated in the verse of the Glorious Qur'ān:

..those who listen to the word attentively (of Allāh ﷻ and His Rasūl ﷺ), and follow (it, knowing that it is) the best of it (of all speech). These are the ones whom Allāh ﷻ has guided, and these are the ones who possess (true) intelligence (wisdom). [39:18]

May Allāh ﷻ grant us the tawfīq to implement the act of listening attentively so that we may acquire true benefit from religious discourses and lessons.

ḤAḌRAT UMME ḤABĪBAH

Ḥaḍrat Umme Ḥabībah was the daughter of Ḥaḍrat Abu Sufyān and was first married to 'Ubaidullāh bin Jaḥsh in Mecca. The couple embraced Islām, and then emigrated to Abyssinia due to persecution by the Qureysh. One night she saw her husband (in a dream) in the most ugly and obnoxious form. The next day she came to know that he had turned Christian. She, however, remained a Muslim and was therefore separated from him.

She was now all alone in exile. But Allāh soon recompensed her loss. The Prophet Muḥammad sent her an offer of marriage through the King Negus, who sent a woman named Abraha to her with the message. She was so happy with the good news that she made over the bracelets and other jewellery that she was wearing to the woman in gratification. King Negus conducted the Prophet Muḥammad's nikāḥ ceremony, and gave her 400 dinars as her portion and many other things in dowry from himself. He also gave a feast and dinars as gift to all those who were present in the ceremony. King Negus then dispatched her to Madinah, with her dowry and other gifts such as perfume, etc. This marriage took place in 7 A. H. (Her father was not a Muslim then). (*Fadhāile 'Āmāl*)

Asharatul Mubasharah

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Abubakr Siddiq
 Ali ibn Abi Talib
 Abu Ubaidah ibn Jarrah
 Zubair ibn Awwaam

Umar ibn Khattab
 Saeed ibn Zaid
 Talha ibn Ubaidah

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Al-Ḥikmah Academy

Toronto • Canada

Tel: +1 647 868 2540

Email: info@alhikmah.ca

