

# VIRTUES OF ‘ULAMĀ’ (SCHOLARS)

All praises are for Allāh ﷻ, the Lord of the worlds. May peace and blessings be upon our beloved messenger, Muhammad ﷺ, his family and fellow believers.

As the ‘ulamā’ are passing away, true knowledge is becoming scarce, and many Muslims don’t seek Islamic knowledge nor do they allow their children to pursue this holy path, I wanted to share some virtues of the ‘ulamā’, so that their importance is perceived, and their virtues are appreciated. I am also writing this to encourage parents to allow their children to embark on this blessed path, and to motivate the students in *hifz* class and public schools to pursue this path. Perhaps, some may become motivated to be an ‘ālim (scholar), encourage their children to embark the blessed path of knowledge or at the very least, they will develop a love for the ‘ulamā’ and support them by all the means accessible to them.

Prophet ﷺ has said: “Be a scholar, a student, a listener, or a lover of knowledge, but don’t be the fifth or you will be destroyed,” ‘Aṭā’, one of the narrators, was asked about the fifth category. So, he said: “Fifth is that you loathe knowledge and the people of knowledge.”<sup>1</sup> May Allāh ﷻ make us from the four categories and protect us from the fifth. Āmīn

## Virtues Of Seeking Knowledge

- Allah ﷻ says in the Qur’ān: “Allāh has elevated the ranks of the believers and those that have been given knowledge.” (*Mujādalah:11*)
- The Prophet ﷺ has said: “Whoever Allāh ﷻ intends good for, He grants him the understanding of *dīn* (religion).” (*Bukhārī*)
- The Prophet ﷺ has said: “Whoever treads a path in quest of knowledge, Allāh ﷻ makes the path to paradise easy for him.” (*Muslim*)
- The Prophet ﷺ has said: “Allāh, His angels, the dwellers of the heavens and the earth, and even the ant in its hole and the fish (in water) supplicate for those who teach people knowledge.” (*Tirmidhī*)
- The Prophet ﷺ has said: “Indeed, the angels lower their wings for the seeker of knowledge, being pleased with what he does. The inhabitants of the heavens and the earth and even the fish in the depths of the ocean seek forgiveness for him. The superiority of the ‘ālim over the ‘ābid (devout worshipper) is like that of the full moon to the rest of the stars (in brightness). (*Abū Dāwūd and Tirmidhī*)

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<sup>1</sup> *Majma’ al-Zawā’id* vol. 1 pg.163 DKI



The above are a few selections from the many Qur'ānic verses and prophetic traditions about the virtues of seeking the knowledge of *sharīah*. This should be enough to inspire us to tread the path of knowledge. In our times, the demand for '*ulamā*' is high but the supply is low. Yes, it is not incumbent (*fard*) on every Muslim to be an '*ālim*' but addressing this demand should be a matter of concern for every Muslim.

## '*Ulamā*' Are the Heirs of The Prophets

Prophet ﷺ has said: "Indeed, the '*ulamā*' are the heirs of the prophets. And verily, the prophets have not bequeathed dinar nor dirham but only knowledge; and he who acquires it, has in fact acquired an abundant portion." (Abū Dāwūd and Tirmidhī)

The above *ḥadīth* expresses the great status of '*ulamā*' and their virtues. Those brothers/sisters that seek the path of knowledge are the heirs of Prophets. It is a great honor that Allāh ﷻ has selected them to serve, preserve, learn, teach, and preach His magnificent religion just as He had selected the Prophets.

## Continuous Rewards for an '*Ālim*' And His Parents

Imagine the rewards of an '*ālim*', from the beginning of his journey till he leaves this world. Even in his grave, he will continue to receive rewards because of the knowledge he has left behind. Prophet ﷺ has said: "When a man dies, his deeds come to an end except for three things: *ṣadaqah jāriyah* (ceaseless charity), knowledge which is beneficial, or a virtuous child who prays for him." (Muslim)

SubḥānAllāh, this *ḥadīth* promises continuous rewards for an '*ālim*', his parents and the donors. As for the *ālim*, it is clear. As for the donors, it is because they have spent their money in the path of Allāh ﷻ. As for the parents, firstly because they were one of the means of their child becoming an '*ālim*'. Secondly, because their child and descendants will make *du'ā*' for them.

## Beautiful Example of the '*Ulamā*'

The example of the '*ulamā*' on the earth is like that of the stars in the skies. The stars are described with three qualities in the Qur'ān:

- 1) The stars are the beauty of the skies.
- 2) The stars are used to pelt the shayāṭīn (devils).
- 3) The stars are used by the travelers to navigate the correct path.



Just like how the stars are the beauty of the skies, the ‘*ulamā*’ are the beauty of the earth. Just as the stars are used to pelt the devils, the ‘*ulamā*’ are used by Allāh ﷻ to defend His religion against the devils on earth. Just as the stars are used to find the correct path, similarly ‘*ulamā*’ are the source of light and guidance for the mankind.

## Who Is an ‘*Ālim*/‘*Ālimah*’?

I wanted to end by defining a true ‘*Ālim*. A true scholar is not the one who has a lot of knowledge. Rather, he is the one who possess the fear (*khashya*) and love of Allāh ﷻ and His messenger ﷺ. He is not only the inheritor of the prophets in knowledge, but also in their character and righteousness.

‘Abdullāh ibn Mas‘ūd (r) said: “Knowledge is not narrating many ‘*aḥadīth*’<sup>3</sup>, rather knowledge is (possessing) the fear (*khasya*) of Allāh ﷻ.”<sup>4</sup>

Imām Mālik said: “Knowledge (*‘ilm*) and wisdom (*ḥikmah*) are a light (*nūr*), Allāh ﷻ guides through it whom he wants, and it is not (knowing) many legal rulings.”<sup>5</sup>

I have prepared this short article before the launch of our ‘*Ālim* Course in September 2021. May Allāh ﷻ grant us the success to be an ‘*ālim*, to love them and to be in their company. Āmīn

Shaykh Kamil Sakhi

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<sup>2</sup> ‘*ālimah* is the feminine form of ‘*ālim*

<sup>3</sup> Plural of *ḥadīth*

<sup>4</sup> *al-Jāmi‘ fī bayān al-‘ilm wa faḍlih* pg.758 Dar ibn al-Jawzī

<sup>5</sup> Ibid