

# Sisters' Class – Lesson 1 – Seeking Knowledge

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## Introduction

- Welcome
- A brief discussion about set-up
- The importance of feedback
- Who am I?

## Aims of the class

- To give the sisters an opportunity to study from a student of knowledge in a class especially for them
- To attract more sisters to come to the lessons
- To provide a foundation for sisters who want to pursue further study, either at home or abroad
- To provide a structured form of learning, where sisters are actually progressing as students of knowledge
- To teach the right balance of subjects, including general topics and issues particular to women
- To encourage further study at home, including memorisation and teaching family
- To encourage sisters to participate in da'wah events

## Class format

- Especially for the sisters
- One way video, two way audio
- Presentation on the screen
- Notes, video, and audio available from [www.islamnewcastle.co.uk](http://www.islamnewcastle.co.uk)

- Work to continue at home
- Progress monitoring, active participation
- Further reading/recommended audio should be provided with every lesson

## Islamic Etiquette

- Observing the limits set by Allah – we’re here to seek Allah’s pleasure, not to earn His anger
- A word about voice

## Participation

- Encourage sisters’ participation
- See real progress
- Ask questions
- Take notes

## A few final points

- All of the material taken from the senior scholars in Madinah and elsewhere
- My job is to help you learn
- These lessons are not meant to be a comprehensive guide to the topic – they are taster lessons

We should all take this opportunity to ask Allah to make this lesson a source of beneficial knowledge and good action, and to make this lesson sincerely for Him alone. Just as we should take this opportunity to thank Him for his bounty – if it were not for the blessings and bounty of Allah then none of us would have been guided:

﴿ وَقَالُوا الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي هَدَانَا لِهَذَا وَمَا كُنَّا لِنَهْتَدِيَ لَوْلَا أَنْ هَدَانَا اللَّهُ ﴾ الأعراف:

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“And they will say, ‘Praise to Allah , who has guided us to this; and we would never have been guided if Allah had not guided us.’” [Al-‘Araaf 7:43]

﴿ وَلَٰكِنَّ اللَّهَ حَبَّبَ إِلَيْكُمُ الْإِيمَانَ وَزَيَّنَهُ فِي قُلُوبِكُمْ وَكَرَّهَ إِلَيْكُمُ الْكُفْرَ وَالْفُسُوقَ  
 وَالْعِصْيَانَ أُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الرَّشِدُونَ ﴿٧﴾ فَضَلًّا مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَنِعْمَةً ۗ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ ﴿٨﴾ ﴾

الحجرات: ٧ - ٨

“but Allah has endeared to you the faith and has made it pleasing in your hearts and has made hateful to you disbelief, defiance and disobedience. Those are the [rightly] guided. \* [It is] as bounty from Allah and favor. And Allah is Knowing and Wise.” [Al-Hujuraat 49:7-8]

### Khutbat-ul-haajah

إِنَّ الْحَمْدَ لِلَّهِ نَحْمَدُهُ وَنَسْتَعِينُهُ وَنَسْتَغْفِرُهُ  
 وَنَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنْ شُرُورِ أَنْفُسِنَا وَمِنْ سَيِّئَاتِ أَعْمَالِنَا  
 مَنْ يَهْدِهِ اللَّهُ فَلَا مُضِلَّ لَهُ، وَمَنْ يَضِلَّهُ فَلَا هَادِيَ لَهُ  
 وَأَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ، وَأَشْهَدُ أَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا عَبْدُهُ وَرَسُولُهُ

Indeed, all praise is for Allah. We praise Him, we seek His help and we ask His forgiveness. Whomsoever Allah guides there is none to misguide him and whomsoever Allah misguides there is none to guide him. And I bear witness that there is no god except Allah, alone and with no partner, and I bear witness that Muhammad is his slave and Messenger.

﴿ يٰٓأَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ حَقَّ تَقَاتِهِ ۖ وَلَا تَمُوتُنَّ إِلَّا وَأَنتُمْ مُسْلِمُونَ ﴿١٠٢﴾ ﴾  
 ﴿ يٰٓأَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اتَّقُوا رَبَّكُمُ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ نَفْسٍ وَاحِدَةٍ وَخَلَقَ مِنْهَا زَوْجَهَا وَبَثَّ مِنْهُمَا رِجَالًا كَثِيرًا  
 وَنِسَاءً ۗ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ الَّذِي تَسَاءَلُونَ بِهِ ۖ وَالْأَرْحَامَ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلَيْكُمْ رَقِيبًا ﴿١﴾ ﴾

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَقُولُوا قَوْلًا سَدِيدًا ﴿٧٠﴾ يُصْلِحْ لَكُمْ أَعْمَالَكُمْ وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ

ذُنُوبِكُمْ وَمَنْ يُطِيعِ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ فَقَدْ فَازَ فَوْزًا عَظِيمًا ﴿٧١﴾﴾

“Oh you who believe! Fear Allah as He should be feared, and die not except as Muslims” (Aal Imraan 3:102)

“Oh people! Fear your Lord who created you from a single person, and from him He created his wife, and from them both he created many men and women. And fear Allah through whom you demand your mutual rights. And Allah is Ever Watchful over you”. ( An-Nisaa’ 4:1)

“Oh you who believe! Fear Allah and speak the truth. He will direct you to do good deeds and forgive you your sins. And whoever obeys Allah and His Messenger has indeed achieved great success”. (Al-Ahzaab 33:70-71)

إِنَّ أَصْدَقَ الْحَدِيثِ كِتَابُ اللَّهِ، وَأَحْسَنَ الْهُدَى هُدَى مُحَمَّدٍ

وَشَرَّ الْأُمُورِ مُحَدَّثَاتُهَا، وَكُلُّ مُحَدَّثَةٍ بَدْعَةٌ

وَكُلُّ بَدْعَةٍ ضَلَالَةٌ، وَكُلُّ ضَلَالَةٍ فِي النَّارِ

Indeed, the best speech is the book of Allah, and the best guidance is the guidance of Muhammad. And the worst of things are the newly invented matters [in the religion], and every newly invented matter is innovation, and every innovation is misguidance, and every misguidance is in the hellfire.

- This wording and the wording of the opening paragraph are reported by An-Nasaa’i and others and are authentic inshaa Allah

# Seeking Knowledge

## The benefits and virtues of seeking knowledge

- Why do we learn the benefits of our actions?
- A few of the Qur'aanic ayaat which encourage us to seek knowledge:

﴿ وَقُلْ رَبِّ زِدْنِي عِلْمًا ۝١١٤ طه: ١١٤ ﴾ •

“and say, ‘My Lord, increase me in knowledge.’” [Taha 19:114]

﴿ أَمَّنْ هُوَ قَنِتٌ ءَانَاءَ اللَّيْلِ سَاجِدًا وَقَائِمًا يَحْذَرُ الْآخِرَةَ وَيَرْجُوا رَحْمَةَ رَبِّهِ ۗ قُلْ

هَلْ يَسْتَوِي الَّذِينَ يَعْلَمُونَ وَالَّذِينَ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ۗ إِنَّمَا يَتَذَكَّرُ أُولُو الْأَلْبَابِ ﴿٩﴾

الزمر: ٩

“Is one who is devoutly obedient during periods of the night, prostrating and standing [in prayer], fearing the Hereafter and hoping for the mercy of his Lord, [like one who does not]? Say, ‘Are those who know equal to those who do not know?’ Only they will remember [who are] people of understanding.” [Az-Zumar 39:9]

﴿ وَمَا كَانُ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ لِيَنْفِرُوا كَافَّةً فَلَوْلَا نَفَرَ مِنْ كُلِّ فِرْقَةٍ مِّنْهُمْ

طَائِفَةٌ لِّيَتَفَقَّهُوا فِي الدِّينِ وَلِيُنذِرُوا قَوْمَهُمْ إِذَا رَجَعُوا إِلَيْهِمْ لَعَلَّهُمْ

يَحْذَرُونَ ﴿١٢٢﴾ التوبة: ١٢٢

“And it is not for the believers to go forth [to battle] all at once. For there should separate from every division of them a group [remaining] to obtain understanding in the religion and warn their people when they return to them that they might be cautious.” [At-Tawbah 9:122]

﴿ هُوَ الَّذِي أَنْزَلَ عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ مِنْهُ آيَاتٌ مُحْكَمَاتٌ هُنَّ أُمُّ الْكِتَابِ وَأُخَرُ

مُتَشَبِهَاتٌ ۗ فَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ زَيْغٌ فَيَتَّبِعُونَ مَا تَشَبَهَ مِنْهُ ابْتِغَاءَ الْفِتْنَةِ وَابْتِغَاءَ

تَأْوِيلُهُ وَمَا يَعْلَمُ تَأْوِيلَهُ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَالرَّاسِخُونَ فِي الْعِلْمِ يَقُولُونَ ءَأَمَّنَّا بِهِ كُلٌّ مِّنْ عِنْدِ

رَبِّنَا وَمَا يَذَّكَّرُ إِلَّا أُولُو الْأَلْبَابِ ﴿٧﴾ آل عمران: ٧

“It is He who has sent down to you, [O Muhammad], the Book; in it are verses [that are] precise - they are the foundation of the Book - and others unspecified. As for those in whose hearts is deviation [from truth], they will follow that of it which is unspecified, seeking discord and seeking an interpretation [suitable to them]. And no one knows its [true] interpretation except Allah . But those firm in knowledge say, "We believe in it. All [of it] is from our Lord." And no one will be reminded except those of understanding.”

- A few of the ahaadeeth which encourage us to seek knowledge:

• عن أبي هريرة قال: قال رسول الله ﷺ: من يُرِدُ اللهُ بِهِ خَيْرًا يُفَقِّهْهُ فِي الدِّينِ

Abu Hurayra (may Allah be pleased with him) said that the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said: “Whoever Allah wants good for, He gives him understanding of the religion”

• عن داود بن جميل عن كثير بن قيس قال كنت جالساً عند أبي الدرداء في

مسجد دمشق فأتاه رجل فقال يا أبا الدرداء أتيتك من المدينة مدينة

رسول الله ﷺ لحديث بلغني أنك تحدث به عن النبي ﷺ قال فما جاء

بك تجارة قال لا قال ولا جاء بك غيره قال لا قال فإني سمعت رسول

الله ﷺ يقول من سلك طريقاً يلتمس فيه علماً سهل الله له طريقاً إلى

الجنة وإن الملائكة لتضع أجنحتها رضا لطالب العلم وإن طالب العلم

يستغفر له من في السماء والأرض حتى الحيتان في الماء وإن فضل العالم

على العابد كفضل القمر على سائر الكواكب إن العلماء ورثة الأنبياء إن

الأنبياء لم يورثوا ديناراً ولا درهماً إنما ورثوا العلم فمن أخذه أخذ بحظ

وافرٍ

Dawood bin Jameel narrates from Katheer bin Qays that he said: “I was sitting with Abu Ad-Dardaa’ (may Allah be pleased with him) in the Mosque in Damascus when a man came to him and said: ‘O Abu Ad-Dardaa’ I have come to you from Madinah, the city of the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) for the sake of a hadith that you narrate from the Prophet (peace be upon him).’ Abu Ad-Dardaa’ said: ‘You didn’t come for business?’. He replied: ‘No’. Abu Ad-Dardaa’ said: ‘You didn’t come for any other reason?’. He replied: ‘No’. Abu Ad-Dardaa’ said: “Indeed I heard the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) say: ‘Whoever seeks out a path to acquire knowledge [of the religion], Allah makes his path to Jannah easy, and indeed the angels lower their wings because of their pleasure at the student of knowledge, and indeed everything in the heavens and the earth seek forgiveness for the student of knowledge [**note:** the most common wording of this hadith is: for the scholar], even the fish in the sea. And the virtue of a scholar in comparison to a [ordinary] worshipper, is like the virtue of the moon, in comparison to the stars – the inheritance of the Prophets, and indeed the Prophets don’t leave deenars and dirhams as inheritance, but they leave knowledge, so whoever takes it, has taken a great portion’

● وعن أبي هريرة أنه مر بسوق المدينة فوقف عليها فقال يا أهل السوق ما

أعجزكم قالوا وما ذلك يا أبا هريرة قالوا ذلك ميراث رسول الله ﷺ

يقسم وأنتم ههنا ألا تذهبون فتأخذون نصيبكم منه قالوا وأين هو قال في

المسجد فخرجوا سراعا ووقف أبو هريرة لهم حتى رجعوا فقال لهم ما

لكم قالوا يا أبا هريرة فقد أتينا فدخلنا فلم نر فيه شيئا يقسم فقال لهم أبو

هريرة وما رأيتم في المسجد أحدا قالوا بلى رأينا قوما يصلون وقوما

يقرأون القرآن وقوما يتذاكرون الحلال والحرام فقال لهم أبو هريرة ويحكم

فذلك ميراث محمد ﷺ

It is narrated that Abu Hurayrah came to the market place when he stopped and said: “O people of the market! How feeble you are!” They replied: “Why is that?” He said: “The inheritance of the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) is being shared out and you are all here, won’t you go and take your share of it!” They said: “Where is it?” He replied: “In the masjid.” So they left in a rush and Abu Hurayrah waited for them until they returned, then he said to them: “What’s the matter?” They said: “O Abu Hurayrah! We came and we entered the masjid and we didn’t see anything being shared out.” So Abu Hurayrah said to them: “Didn’t you see anyone there at all?” They said: “We did. We saw people praying, and people reading the Qur’aan, and people studying about the halaal and haraam.” So Abu

Hurayrah said to them: “Woe to you! That was the inheritance of Muhammad (peace be upon him).”

- عن زُرِّ بْنِ حُبَيْشٍ قَالَ أَتَيْتُ صَفْوَانَ بْنَ عَسَّالِ الْمُرَادِيِّ فَقَالَ مَا جَاءَ بِكَ قُلْتُ أَنْبَطُ الْعِلْمَ قَالَ فَإِنِّي سَمِعْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ يَقُولُ مَا مِنْ خَارِجٍ خَرَجَ مِنْ بَيْتِهِ فِي طَلَبِ الْعِلْمِ إِلَّا وَضَعَتْ لَهُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ أَجْنِحَتَهَا رِضًا بِمَا يَصْنَعُ

Zirr bin Hubaysh said: “I came to Safwaan bin ‘Assaal Al-Muraadee (may Allah be pleased with him), and he said: “Why did you come?” I said: “I came to seek knowledge”. He said: “I heard the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) say: ‘There is no one who leaves his house to seek knowledge, except that the Angels lower their wings in humility out of pleasure for what he is doing.’”

- عن أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ قَالَ سَمِعْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ يَقُولُ مَنْ جَاءَ مَسْجِدِي هَذَا لَمْ يَأْتِهِ إِلَّا لِخَيْرٍ يَتَعَلَّمُهُ أَوْ يُعَلِّمُهُ فَهُوَ بِمَنْزِلَةِ الْمُجَاهِدِ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَمَنْ جَاءَ لِغَيْرِ ذَلِكَ فَهُوَ بِمَنْزِلَةِ الرَّجُلِ يَنْظُرُ إِلَى مَتَاعِ غَيْرِهِ

Abu Hurayrah said: “I heard the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) say: ‘Whoever comes to my masjid, and the only reason for him coming is to learn or teach some good, he is in the position of a *mujaahid*, who fights in the cause of Allah. And whoever comes for something else, he is in the position of a man who looking at someone else’s property.’”

## The history of seeking knowledge

- Who was the first person to travel, seeking knowledge?

وَإِذْ قَالَ مُوسَى لِفَتَاهُ لَا أَبْرَحُ حَتَّىٰ أَبْلُغَ مَجْمَعَ الْبَحْرَيْنِ أَوْ أَمْضِيَ حُقُبًا ﴿٦٠﴾ فَلَمَّا بَلَغَا مَجْمَعَ بَيْنَهُمَا نَسِيَا حُوتَهُمَا فَاتَّخَذَ سَبِيلَهُ فِي الْبَحْرِ سَرَبًا ﴿٦١﴾ فَلَمَّا جَاوَزَا قَالَ لِفَتَاهُ إِنَّا غَدَاءُ نَا لَقَدْ لَقِينَا مِنْ سَفَرِنَا هَذَا نَصَبًا ﴿٦٢﴾ قَالَ أَرَأَيْتَ إِذْ أَوَيْنَا إِلَىٰ

الصَّخْرَةَ فَإِنِّي نَسِيتُ الْحُوتَ وَمَا أَنسَنِيهِ إِلَّا الشَّيْطَانُ أَنْ أَذْكُرَهُ، وَاتَّخَذَ سَبِيلَهُ فِي الْبَحْرِ  
عَجَبًا ﴿٦٣﴾ قَالَ ذَلِكَ مَا كُنَّا نَبْغِ فَأَرْتَدَّا عَلَىٰ آثَارِهِمَا قَصَصًا ﴿٦٤﴾ فَوَجَدَا عَبْدًا مِّنْ  
عِبَادِنَا ءَأْتَيْنَاهُ رَحْمَةً مِّنْ عِنْدِنَا وَعَلَّمْنَاهُ مِن لَّدُنَّا عِلْمًا ﴿٦٥﴾ قَالَ لَهُ مُوسَىٰ هَلْ أَتَّبِعُكَ  
عَلَىٰ أَنْ تُعَلِّمَنِي مِمَّا عَلَّمْتَ رُشْدًا ﴿٦٦﴾ قَالَ إِنَّكَ لَنْ تَسْتَطِيعَ مَعِيَ صَبْرًا ﴿٦٧﴾ وَكَيْفَ تَصْبِرُ  
عَلَىٰ مَا لَمْ تُحِطْ بِهِ خُبْرًا ﴿٦٨﴾ قَالَ سَتَجِدُنِي إِن شَاءَ اللَّهُ صَابِرًا وَلَا أَعْصِي لَكَ أَمْرًا ﴿٦٩﴾  
قَالَ فَإِنِ اتَّبَعْتَنِي فَلَا تَسْأَلْنِي عَنْ شَيْءٍ حَتَّىٰ أُحَدِّثَ لَكَ مِنْهُ ذِكْرًا ﴿٧٠﴾ ﴿الكهف: ٦٠ -

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- Read the translation of these ayaat at home – Surah Al-Kahf 18:60-70

Points of benefit from the story?

- No pride
- Hard work - يحيى بن أبي كثير يقول لا يدرك العلم بالراحة -
- Persistence & Patience – sabr
- Good manners with the teacher
- Desire to learn – good intention
- Actively seeking knowledge

### Hadith of the *wafd* (delegation) of Abdul-Qays

- عن ابن عباسٍ أَنَّ وَفَدَ عَبْدَ الْقَيْسِ لَمَّا أَتَوْا النَّبِيَّ ﷺ قَالُوا يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ إِنَّا  
لَا نَسْتَطِيعُ أَنْ نَأْتِيكَ إِلَّا فِي شَهْرِ الْحَرَامِ وَبَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَكَ هَذَا الْحَيُّ مِنْ كُفَّارِ  
مُضَرَ فَمُرْنَا بِأَمْرٍ فَصَلِّ نُخْبِرُ بِهِ مِنْ وَرَاءِنَا وَنَدْخُلُ بِهِ الْجَنَّةَ...

On the authority of Ibn ‘Abbaas, that the delegation of Abdul-Qays said to the Prophet (peace be upon him), when they came to him, “O Messenger of Allah! We can only come to

you in the forbidden months, for between us and you are the tribe of disbelievers [called] Mudar, so give us detailed instruction, so that we can inform those who we left behind, and we can enter Jannah [by acting on it].

This is the perfect intention.

- Imaam Ahmad was asked about the intention for seeking knowledge. He said: “To correct yourself and others”
- Where that is found in the hadith?

## The manners of seeking knowledge

- A brief introduction to some of the manners:
- Manners that relate to Allah
  - Sincerity
  - Following the way of the Prophet (peace be upon him)
  - These two are the conditions of every action
- Manners that relate to Yourself
  - Review your intention
  - “Knowledge will not be achieved by someone who is arrogant, nor someone who is shy”
    - The problem of shyness and the statement of ‘Aa’isha: “The best of the women are the women of the Ansaar. They don’t allow shyness to stop them from seeking knowledge in the religion”
  - “Knowledge will not be achieved by resting and relaxing”
  - Act upon what you know
  - Call to what you act upon
  - Be patient as a result of what happens to you when you do the above
- Manners with your teacher
  - Understand your teacher’s status
  - Give your teacher your full attention
    - Take notes
    - Don’t read other people’s explanations while the teacher is explaining
  - Give your teacher his/her space

- Manners with your other students
  - Allow them their rights

## How to seek knowledge

- The statement of Ibn Jamaa'ah
- The building blocks of knowledge: memorisation and understanding
  - Memorisation should preferably come first, but as you get older this is not always possible.
- The best of deeds are the continuous deeds: "The most beloved of deeds according to Allah are those which are continuous"
- The importance of progression and structured learning
- Setting yourself a timetable
- The example of the professional athlete

## Different types of Islamic knowledge

- Knowledge which is sought for itself
- Knowledge which is sought as a tool to help you learn something else

## Ways of seeking knowledge

- The importance of a Shaykh
- Order of preference:
  - All of the items mentioned below, if done together, are better than one particular method.
  - Reading a book to a shaykh directly – one on one or as a small group
  - Sitting in a class
  - Listening to a tape – make sure to take notes and ask questions
  - Reading a book – "Whoever makes his book his shaykh will have more mistakes than he is correct"

## Sources of knowledge: Building your own Islamic library

- How to know a good book
- The importance of translation
- How to read/browse for a book:
  - Introduction
  - Contents/Index
  - A couple of pages from the main text.
  - At least do this with every book you have in your house, and before you buy every single book.
  - Seek advice – in Arabic from the scholars, in English from the students of knowledge but be careful – not every student of knowledge is equal when it comes to books and prints.
- Bad things to look for
  - Lots of spelling mistakes
  - Poor layout/print quality
  - Blank pages

## Book categories

- This slide has since been updated and moved to a separate document: The book list