



STUDENTS AND TEACHERS OF THE QURAN:

CODE OF CONDUCT

Etiquette for the Student and Teacher of the Quran

M. Saleem Gaibie

Students and Teachers of the Quran: Code of Conduct



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Cape Town

Western Cape

South Africa

info@al-tanzil.co.za

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Foreword

For many years I have been searching for couplets or a concise booklet that could outline the etiquette for students and teachers of the Qur'ān; something that could easily be read in a short space of time. I perused the *Tibyān* of Imam al-Nawawī, the works of al-Ājurī and the poems of Abū 'Amr al-Dānī, amongst many others. However, these were all larger works that required some time to read through.

Upon teaching the *Khulāṣah* of our teacher, Sheikh 'Abd Allah ibn Ṣāliḥ al-'Ubayd, I found the conclusion of his poem – a mere seven lines – to be most apt, comprehensively summarising these etiquette.

This booklet comprises the conclusion of his poem, along with a short commentary on its lines, mostly inspired from his own explanation of them. I have added the first line from the *Khulāṣah* to serve as an introduction to the text and the final line to terminate it. The total number of lines are therefore nine.

I have tried to keep the discussions as simple as possible because they are directed at younger minds.

M. Saleem Gaibie

Introduction

If the Qur'ān is the noblest of all books, then every Qur'ānic science is considered as the noblest of all sciences. This includes *Tajwīd*, *Qirā'āt*, *Rasm* (Qur'ānic script), *'Add al-Fawāṣil* (Verse enumeration), *Tafsīr*, and so on. Likewise, those who have dedicated themselves to the Qur'ān are considered as the Noblest of this ummah. The Prophet ﷺ said:

«أَشْرَافُ هَذِهِ الْأُمَّةِ حَمَلَةُ الْقُرْآنِ»

“The Noblest of this nation (of Islam) are the bearers of the Qur'ān.”

Allah has carefully chosen those from amongst the ummah to be included amongst the fraternity of the Qur'ān:

ثُمَّ أَوْرَثْنَا الْكِتَابَ الَّذِينَ اصْطَفَيْنَا مِنْ عِبَادِنَا

We will select from amongst Our slaves those who will inherit this Book.

Sūrah Fāṭir: 32.

These bearers of the Qur'ān are so beloved by Allah, that He calls them His family. The Prophet ﷺ said:

«اللَّهُ مِنَ النَّاسِ أَهْلُونَ»، قِيلَ: مَنْ هُمْ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ؟، قَالَ: «أَهْلُ الْقُرْآنِ هُمْ أَهْلُ اللَّهِ، وَخَاصَّتُهُ»

“From amongst man there are those who are the family of Allah.” It was said:

“Who are they O Messenger of Allah?” He replied: “The fraternity of the Qur'ān; they are the family of Allah and His chosen ones.”

This elite fraternity – like any other fraternity, club, institution or organization – has rules for its members if they wish to be included in it. These rules and etiquettes have been encapsulated by Sheikh 'Abd Allah ibn Ṣāliḥ al-'Ubayd al-Tamīmī in a few lines of poetry:

The Poem

بَابُ آدَابِ الْقَارِيِّ وَالْمُقَرِّيِّ

لَكَ الْحَمْدُ يَا مَوْلَايَ ذَا الْجُودِ وَالْإِيرِ	1
وَصَلِّ عَلَى الْمُخْتَارِ مَعَ آلِهِ الْغُرِّ	
وَأَذَابُهُمْ نُصْحٌ وَتَعْظِيمُ رَبِّنَا	93
وَهَمَّةُ نَفْسٍ نَشْرُ لَيْلِيْنَ مَعَ الطُّهْرِ	
سُكُونٌ عَفَافٌ وَاتِّبَاعٌ تَوَرُّعٌ	94
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سُجُودٌ، وَلِلْقَارِيِّ مَهَابَةٌ شَيْخِهِ	95
وَفَاءٌ وَحِفْظٌ وَالِدُّعَاءُ لَدَى الْفَجْرِ	
وَبِرٌّ تَعَنَّ خَافِضًا وَمُعَشِّرًا	96
تَعَاهُدُهُ فِي كُلِّ حَالٍ، وَلِلْمُقَرِّيِّ	
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وَحَتَمْتُ نِظَائِي كَافِتِاحِي أَوَّلًا	100
لَكَ الْحَمْدُ يَا مَوْلَايَ ذَا الْجُودِ وَالْإِيرِ	

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Sheikh ‘Abd Allah ibn Ṣāliḥ al-‘Ubayd starts his poem with the *basmalah*, in accordance with the Qur’ān, as well as in accordance with the ḥadīth of the Prophet ﷺ:

«كُلُّ أَمْرٍ ذِي بَالٍ لَا يُبْدَأُ فِيهِ بِ: بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ فَهُوَ أَقْطَعُ»

“Every good deed not started with “*bism Allah al-Raḥmān al-Raḥīm*” is severed of blessing.”

Introduction to the Poem

TEXT:

لَكَ الْحَمْدُ يَا مَوْلَايَ ذَا الْجُودِ وَالْإِزَّةِ وَصَلِّ عَلَى الْمُخْتَارِ مَعَ آلِهِ الْغُرِّ

1

TRANSLATION:

All praise is due to You, O my Master, the Possessor of generosity and kindness; and send salutations upon the Chosen One, as well as his noble family.

COMMENTARY:

The first thing the Sheikh states after the *basmalah* is “all praise is only due to Allah” (*al-ḥamd li Allah*). Again, this is in accordance with the Qur’ān, as well as the ḥadīth of the Prophet ﷺ:

«كُلُّ أَمْرٍ ذِي بَالٍ لَا يُبْدَأُ فِيهِ بِ: الْحَمْدِ لِلَّهِ فَهُوَ أَقْطَعُ»

“Every good deed not started with “*al-ḥamd li Allah*” is severed of blessing.”

After praising Allah, he sends salutations upon the beloved Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ.

Etiquette for the Student and the Teacher

Sheikh ‘Abd Allah al-‘Ubayd divides the etiquette into three:

- 1) Those that apply to both the student and the teacher.
- 2) Those specific to the student.
- 3) Those specific to the teacher.

Those etiquettes for both student and teacher are mentioned first.

TEXT:

وَأَدَابُهُمْ نُصْحٌ وَتَعْظِيمُ رَبِّنَا وَهَمَّةٌ نَفْسٍ تَشْرُيْنُ مَعَ الظَّهْرِ

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TRANSLATION:

Their etiquette is *naṣīḥah*, glorifying our Lord, due diligence, propagation, softness, as well as purity.

COMMENTARY:

In this line, six etiquettes are mentioned for both the student and the teacher:

[1] Naṣīḥah (نُصْحٌ)

The word *naṣīḥah* is generally understood as being sincere in our intentions.¹ Sincerity of intention is one of the foundational principles of Islam. The Prophet ﷺ said:

¹ No English translation can encompass the meaning of the word “*naṣīḥah*”; it is a very broad term with many varied implications. In addition to being sincere in one’s intention, it also implies good conduct towards another, desiring what is good for the next person, as well as offering good counsel. The Prophet ﷺ said:

«الدِّينُ النَّصِيحَةُ، قُلْنَا لِمَنْ؟ قَالَ: لِلَّهِ، وَلِكِتَابِهِ، وَلِرَسُولِهِ، وَلِأَيِّمَةِ الْمُسْلِمِينَ، وَعَامَتِهِمْ»

«إِنَّمَا الْأَعْمَالُ بِالنِّيَّاتِ، وَإِنَّمَا لِكُلِّ امْرِئٍ مَا نَوَى»

“Certainly actions are but by intentions, and every person shall get what he intended.”

Allah says in the Qur’ān about the previous nations:

وَمَا أُمِرُوا إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ مُخْلِصِينَ لَهُ الدِّينَ ۚ

They were not ordered with anything except to worship Allah, being sincere to Him in there religion. Al-Bayyinah: 6.

If our intentions determine the success of our deeds, then our intentions need to be sincere for them to be considered noteworthy, noble and for them to be accepted by Allah. Our intention for studying should be only for the sake of Allah; it should not have any hint of ostentation,² acceptance, gaining recognition, stature, attaining some kind of worldly gain,³ etc. Allah says:

مَنْ كَانَ يُرِيدُ حَرْثَ الْآخِرَةِ نَزِدْ لَهُ فِي حَرْثِهِ ۚ وَمَنْ كَانَ يُرِيدُ حَرْثَ الدُّنْيَا
نُؤْتِهِ مِنْهَا وَمَالَهُ فِي الْآخِرَةِ مِنْ نَصِيبٍ ﴿٣٠﴾

“Religion is *naṣīḥah*.” We asked: “To whom?” He answered: “To Allah, His Book, His Messenger, to leaders of the muslims and to their common folk.”

² The Prophet ﷺ said about those who are insincere in their intentions:

«مَنْ طَلَبَ الْعِلْمَ لِيُمَارِيَ بِهِ السُّفَهَاءَ، أَوْ يُكَاتِرَ بِهِ الْعُلَمَاءَ، أَوْ يُصْرِفَ بِهِ وُجُوهُ النَّاسِ إِلَيْهِ فَلْيَتَّبِعُوا مُنْعَدَّهُ مِنَ النَّارِ»
“Whoever learns knowledge so that he may contest fools, compete with scholars or attract attention to himself, will assume his place in the Fire.”

³ The Prophet ﷺ said about those who study for worldly gains:

«مَنْ تَعَلَّمَ عِلْمًا مِمَّا يُبْتَغَى بِهِ وَجْهُ اللَّهِ تَعَالَى، لَا يَتَعَلَّمُهُ إِلَّا لِيُصِيبَ بِهِ عَرَضًا مِنَ الدُّنْيَا، لَمْ يَجِدْ عَرْفَ الْجَنَّةِ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ»
“Whoever learns knowledge by which one (normally) seeks the pleasure of Allah, but learns it to attain some worldly gain, he will not find the scent of paradise on the Day of Resurrection.”

Whoever intends the harvest (reward) of the Hereafter, We will increase for him his harvest; and whoever intends the harvest of this world, We will give him thereof, and he will have no share (of reward) in the Hereafter. Sūrat al-Shūrā: 21.

Thus, the reward of insincerity is restricted to this world. Even if one becomes a celebrity or amasses all the wealth of this world, it remains insignificant in comparison to the reward of the Hereafter.⁴

A means of checking whether our intentions are sincere is that we perform these deeds in private exactly as we perform them in public. Also, our estimation in the eyes of people, their criticism and their praise do not affect our deeds.

Through maintaining sincere intentions – like all other acts of worship – we will gain closeness to our Creator, and the closer we are to him, the closer we are to ultimate success; immortality and eternal bliss in Paradise.

[2] Glorification of Allah (وَتَعْظِيمُ رَبِّنَا)

Sheikh ‘Abd Allah al-‘Ubayd explains that having *naṣiḥah* towards the Qur’ān includes reciting it correctly, memorising it, studying it, teaching it, practicing upon it and propagating it. It also includes

⁴ Some deplorable intentions held by teachers are boasting about how many students they have, how many different types of students they have or how huge their institutions are. Likewise, a teacher who harbours ill-feelings towards a student for preferring to study by another is indicative of insincerity. *Al-Tibyān*: 53-54.

honouring the student of the Qur'ān.⁵ Through all these acts, we will be glorifying and honouring Allah.

[3] Due Diligence (وَهْمَةٌ نَفْسٍ)

The teacher should be eager to teach his classes. He should be focused on the lesson at hand, keen on making the students understand the lesson and not be distracted by external things.⁶

This means that one is serious about studying, works hard and puts in the required effort to attain what is required at the particular level of study. Avoid all forms of laziness and those things which would impede one's progress; fight your passions and inner-demons so that they do not inhibit your journey of study.

Sheikh al-'Ubayd encourages the student to read the biographies of the earlier scholars and realise the sacrifices they made to travel to distant lands to acquire knowledge.

[4] Propagation (نَشْرٌ)

This means that one should propagate and pass on all the knowledge that one acquires. The Prophet ﷺ said:

«خَيْرُكُمْ مَنْ تَعَلَّمَ الْقُرْآنَ وَعَلَّمَهُ»

“The best of you are those who learn and teach the Qur'ān.”

⁵ *Al-Tibyān fī Ādāb Ḥamalāt al-Qur'ān*: 57.

⁶ *Al-Tibyān fī Ādāb Ḥamalāt al-Qur'ān*: 60.

There are two components to this ḥadīth: the first is personal benefit i.e. personal empowerment and growth by studying the Qur’ān, and the second is empowering others and helping others to grow by teaching them what one has studied of the Qur’ānic sciences. According to this narration, only by fulfilling both components of the ḥadīth would one be included amongst “the best” (حَيْرُكُمْ).

Whatever one has acquired through study – no matter how little – he/she should strive to pass it on to others. The Prophet ﷺ said:

«بَلِّغُوا عَنِّي وَلَوْ آيَةً»

“Propagate from me, even if it be one verse.”

At the same time, understand that if a person has not formally studied, then he/she may not be sufficiently empowered and fit to teach.

[5] Softness (لِينٌ)

One should have a soft-hearted nature and gentleness in one’s manner of teaching. Allah says about the Prophet ﷺ in the Qur’ān:

فَبِمَا رَحْمَةٍ مِّنَ اللَّهِ لِنْتَ لَهُمْ ۚ وَلَوْ كُنْتَ فَظًّا غَلِيظَ الْقَلْبِ لَانفَضُّوا مِنْ حَوْلِكَ ۚ

فَاعْفُ عَنْهُمْ وَاسْتَغْفِرْ لَهُمْ

So it is by mercy from Allah that you were gentle with them. Had you been harsh and hard-hearted, they would have dispersed from around you. So pardon them and ask forgiveness for them. Sūrah Āl ‘Imrān: 159.

The Prophet ﷺ said:

«لَيُنْوَ لِمَنْ تُعَلِّمُونَ، وَلِمَنْ تَتَعَلَّمُونَ مِنْهُ»

“Be gentle with your students, and with those who learn from them.”

Sheikh ‘Abd Allah al-‘Ubayd comments that being harsh, rude and stern are blameworthy traits, unbecoming of one endowed with the Qur’ān.

[6] Purity (الطُّهْرُ)

This includes internal as well as external purity. Internal purity refers to purity of intention and cleansing oneself of maladies of the heart. External purity is being in the state of ablution, wearing clean clothes, brushing one’s teeth before recitation, sitting in a clean place and so forth.

TEXT:

سُكُونٌ عَفَافٌ وَإِتِّبَاعٌ تَوَرُّعٌ وَتَرْكٌ مِرَاءٍ وَالِدَّاءِ مَعَ الْفِكْرِ

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TRANSLATION:

Composure, integrity, following (the Qur’ān), piety, leaving argumentation, supplication, along with contemplation.

COMMENTARY:

A further seven etiquettes are mentioned in this line:

[7] Composure (سُكُونٌ)

The teacher and the student should both be composed and at ease in the class, focused on the lesson. They should not be distracted, fidget with their fingers, look around unnecessarily, and so forth.

[8] Integrity (عَفَافٌ)

This means that one should be honest, upright and righteous. Sheikh al-‘Ubayd relates that it also means that one is abstinent of the vanities of this world.

[9] Following the Qur’ān (وَإِتِّبَاعٌ)

One should strive to practise and adopt the teachings of the Qur’ān. The Qur’ān is a book of character and conduct. Therefore, when ‘Ā’ishah رضي الله عنها was asked about the character of the Prophet ﷺ, she replied:

«كَانَ خُلُقُهُ الْقُرْآنَ»

“His character was the Qur’ān.”

[10] Piety (تَوَرُّعٌ)

This means that he/she obeys all the commandments in the Qur’ān, refrains from all the prohibitions, strives to practise upon those things which are encouraged and takes precaution from that which is disliked. Our pious predecessors have said:

«هَذَا الْعِلْمُ دِينٌ، فَانْظُرُوا عَمَّنْ تَأْخُذُونَ دِينَكُمْ»

“This knowledge constitutes religion, so be wary from whom you take your religion from.”

If our religion demands action (عَمَل), then one should look for a teacher who is practising.

[11] Leaving Argumentation (وَتَرْكُ مِرَاءٍ)

One should avoid quarreling, skepticism and debating. These are often signs of hypocrisy. Often students argue and debate about who has the better teacher, whose teacher recites better, whose teacher has a higher *sanad*, whose teacher is more learned, etc. Sometimes the teachers themselves have similar arguments and encounters. The Prophet ﷺ said:

«إِنَّمَا هَلَكَ مَنْ كَانَ قَبْلَكُمْ بِالْاِخْتِلَافِ فَلْيَقْرَأْ كُلُّ امْرِئٍ مِنْكُمْ مَا أُقِرَّ»

“Disputes and differences destroyed those (the nations) before you, so let every person recite based on how he was taught.”

[12] Supplication (وَالِدُعَاءُ)

Allah loves that we call upon him and supplicate on Him to fulfill our needs:

وَقَالَ رَبُّكُمْ ادْعُونِي أَسْتَجِبْ لَكُمْ ط

“And your Lord says: ‘Call upon Me, so I may answer you.’” Sūrat al-Mu’min:

60.

There are certain occasions and times when one’s supplications and prayers are more readily accepted. They include supplicating Allah after one has recited. The Prophet ﷺ said:

«مَنْ قَرَأَ الْقُرْآنَ، فَلْيَسْأَلِ اللَّهَ بِكَ بِهِ، فَإِنَّهُ سَيَأْتِي قَوْمٌ يَقْرءُونَ الْقُرْآنَ، يَسْأَلُونَ النَّاسَ بِهِ»

“Whoever recites the Qur’ān, let him ask Allah ﷻ through it (the recitation).
Certainly there will come a people who will recite the Qur’ān and ask from
mankind.”

We should make it a habit to supplicate Allah whenever we
terminate our recitation of the Qur’ān.

Whatever branch of Qur’ānic knowledge we are busy studying, we
should always supplicate Allah to ease the study for us and place
blessings in our study. The success of our studies lies only in the
hands of Allah.

[13] Contemplation (الْفِكْر)

There are numerous places in the Qur’ān where Allah instructs us to
contemplate and ponder on the meaning of the verses. Allah says:

أَفَلَا يَتَذَكَّرُونَ الْقُرْآنَ أَمْ عَلَى قُلُوبٍ أَقْفَالُهَا

Do they not ponder regarding the Qur’ān or are there locks on their hearts?

Sūrah Muḥammad: 24.

Allah speaks to us through the Qur’ān. At some point during our
journey in the study of the Qur’ān, we should make effort to
understand this speech because it is the words and communiqué of
our Creator.

TEXT:

سُجُودٌ، وَلِلْقَارِي مَهَابَةٌ شَيْخِهِ وَفَاءٌ وَحِفْظٌ وَالْذُّعَاءُ لَدَى الْقَجْرِ

TRANSLATION:

And prostration (of recitation). And for the student: reverence of his sheikh, loyalty (to the teacher), protection (of the teacher) and supplication at the time of fajr.

COMMENTARY:

[14] The Prostration of Recitation (سُجُودٌ)

One should try to observe the prostration of recitation. The Prophet



said:

«إِذَا قَرَأَ ابْنُ آدَمَ السَّجْدَةَ، فَسَجَدَ، اعْتَزَلَ الشَّيْطَانُ يَبْكِي، يَقُولُ: يَا وَيْلَهُ، أُمِرَ ابْنُ آدَمَ بِالسُّجُودِ فَسَجَدَ، فَلَهُ الْجَنَّةُ، وَأُمِرْتُ بِالسُّجُودِ فَأُتَيْتُ، فِي النَّارِ»

“When the son of Adam recites a (verse of) prostration and then prostrates, Satan departs from him weeping, saying ‘Woe to him! The son of Adam was ordered to prostrate and he prostrated, so for him is the Garden (paradise). I was ordered to prostrate but I disobeyed, so for me is the Fire.’”

Etiquette for the Student

After mentioning all the characteristics for both the teacher and the student, Sheikh al-ʿUbayd starts with those qualities specific for the student. He mentions nine.

[1] Honouring the Teacher (مَهَابَةُ شَيْخِهِ)

The student should honour his/her teacher in the class as well as outside of the class. The student should deem his/her teacher as competent in whatever they are training you in, else the benefit will be deficient.⁷

[2] Loyalty to the Teacher (وَفَاءٌ)

Sheikh al-ʿUbayd explains that the student should honour the teacher and maintain a good relationship with him even after they have completed their studies with the teacher. Many students honour their teachers while they are studying with them, but after the period of study, it is as if they do not acknowledge their teachers.

[3] Protecting the Teacher (حِفْظٌ)

The student should maintain a good atmosphere in the class, one conducive for study. This will include a good relationship with all the participants in the class, sitting like a student would sit and not raising one's voice above the teacher in the class. One should also refrain from unnecessary laughing, not having private discussions

⁷ *Al-Tibyān fī Ādāb Ḥamalāt al-Qurʾān*: 64.

and whispering to others during the lesson. Protecting the classroom and not disrupting the lesson is part of protecting the teacher as well as honouring him/her.⁸

If anyone speaks ill of the teacher, the student should defend the teacher. If the student is unable to do so, he/she should leave that gathering.

[4] Praying for the Teacher (وَالدُّعَاءُ لَدَى الْفَجْرِ)

One should pray for one's teacher. Sheikh al-'Ubayd mentions that the pious predecessors would pray for their teachers in their lessons, in their writings, in privacy and especially at *fajr* (early morning) time when one's prayers are accepted by Allah. They would also give charity before attending their lessons and pray:

«اللَّهُمَّ اسْتُرْ عَيْبَ مُعَلِّمِي عَنِّي، وَلَا تُذْهِبْ بَرَكَاتَ عِلْمِهِ مِنِّي»

“O Allah, cover my teacher's faults from me and do not take the blessing of his knowledge away from me.”⁹

TEXT:

وَيَرْتَعَنَ خَافِضًا وَمُعَشِّرًا تَعَاهِدُهُ فِي كُلِّ حَالٍ، وَلِلْمُقَرِّي

96

TRANSLATION:

Kindness, reciting in a beautiful voice, lowering the voice, learning 10 verses at a time, making a pact with it (the Qur'an) in all circumstances. And (etiquette) for the teacher...

⁸ *Al-Tibyān fī Ādāb Ḥamalāt al-Qur'ān*: 66.

⁹ *Al-Tibyān fī Ādāb Ḥamalāt al-Qur'ān*: 65.

COMMENTARY:

[5] Kindness (بِرٍّ)

One should be concerned regarding the well-being of the teacher. One should enquire about the teacher's well-being, even after one has completed their studies with them. If one is able to assist the teacher if he/she requires any assistance, then one should.

[6] Reciting Melodiously (تَغَنَّيً)

We are encouraged to recite the Qur'ān melodiously. The Prophet ﷺ said:

«لَيْسَ مِنَّا مَنْ لَمْ يَتَغَنَّ بِالْقُرْآنِ»

“He is not from amongst us who does not chant the Qur'ān.”

While we are encouraged to recite melodiously, to recite with *Tajwīd* is obligatory. Therefore, reciting with melody must be in accordance with the rules of *Tajwīd*, else it will not be allowed.

[7] Humility (خَافِضًا)

Humility is vital in the quest for knowledge. If the student lacks humility, he/she trivialises or refuses the guidance of the teacher instead of accepting the guidance because they think that they know better than the teacher. This is also a quality emphasised in the Qur'ān:

وَعِبَادُ الرَّحْمَنِ الَّذِينَ يَمْشُونَ عَلَى الْأَرْضِ هَوْنًا وَإِذَا خَاطَبَهُمُ الْجَاهِلُونَ قَالُوا سَلَامًا ﴿٦٣﴾

And the servants of the Most Merciful are those who walk on the earth humbly. And when the ignorant harassers address them, they say: “Peace”.

Sūrat al-Furqān: 63.

[8] 10 Verses at a Time (مُعَشَّرًا)

The Successor, Abū ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Sulamī¹⁰ relates how they used to read to the Companions of the Prophet ﷺ:

“Those who taught us how to recite – ‘Uthmān ibn ‘Affān, ‘Abd Allah ibn Mas‘ūd and Ubayy ibn Ka‘b ؓ – related to me that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ taught them 10 verses and would not go onto the next 10 (verses) until they learned what practices those verses held; so we learned both (the recitation of) the Qur’ān and its practice.”¹¹

This shows a gradual study of the Qur’ān as opposed to the present-day hasty approach.

[9] Make a Pact with the Qur’ān (تَعَاهُدُهُ فِي كُلِّ حَالٍ)

One should take out time daily to connect with the Qur’ān, whether it is to recite it, to study one of its sciences, to read a translation of its meanings or to reflect upon its meanings.

The Prophet ﷺ said:

«تَعَاهَدُوا هَذَا الْقُرْآنَ، فَوَالَّذِي نَفْسِي مُحَمَّدٍ بِيَدِهِ، لَهُوَ أَشَدُّ ثَقَلًا مِنَ الْإِبِلِ فِي عُقْلِهَا»

¹⁰ He read to the Companions of the Prophet ﷺ: ‘Uthmān, ‘Abd Allah ibn Mas‘ūd, Ubayy ibn Ka‘b, ‘Alī and Zayd ibn Thābit ؓ. His student was ‘Āṣim ibn Abī al-Najūd al-Bahdalah.

¹¹ *Sharḥ al-Khāqāniyyah* of Abū ‘Amr al-Dānī: 2/264.

«حَدَّثَنِي الَّذِينَ كَانُوا يُقْرَأُونَ عِثْمَانَ بْنَ عَفَّانَ وَعَبْدُ اللَّهِ بْنُ مَسْعُودٍ وَأَبِي بَنِي كَعْبٍ ؓ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ كَانَ يُقْرَأُهُمُ الْعَشْرَ، وَلَا يُجَاوِزُونَا إِلَى عَشْرٍ أُخْرَى حَتَّى يَتَعَلَّمُوا مَا فِيهَا مِنَ الْعَمَلِ، فَتَعَلَّمْنَا الْقُرْآنَ وَالْعَمَلَ جَمِيعًا»

“Make a contract with this Qur’ān. I take an oath by the One in Whose Hand
Muḥammad’s soul is, it certainly escapes faster from memory than a camel
from its knot.”

At the end of the line, Sheikh al-‘Ubayd starts explaining the
etiquette for the teacher. This continues into the next line.

Etiquette for the Teacher

TEXT:

تَدْرُجُ إِكْرَامًا وَبَذَلٌ وَرِفْقُهُ تَوَاضَعُ إِحْسَانًا وَصَبْرٌ مَعَ الْعَفْرِ

97

TRANSLATION:

[And etiquette for the teacher:] gradual advancement (in their training), generosity, sacrifice, gentleness, humility, excellence, patience as well as forgiveness.

COMMENTARY:

[1] Gradual Advancement in Their Training (تَدْرُجُ)

In the study of any science there are various levels or stages of growth; the student should complete the initial levels before progressing to the next. Each level trains the student and prepares them for the next, more advanced level.

The teacher understands this and should assess every student individually because the capacity and ability of every person differs from one to the other. Those students who are able to handle a little work should not be overburdened with a workload that would deter them from their studies, while those who have a greater capacity should not be given so little work that they become bored with their studies. The teacher should guide the student and facilitate the progress and advancement of the student through each level.

This entire process requires time and does not happen overnight. The teacher and the student should understand this and practise forbearance whilst the student develops from one level to the next.

Skipping any level may prove detrimental and result in a student with deficiencies.

[2] Generosity (إِكْرَامٌ)

The teacher should not be miserly with his/her students and be willing to spend and assist them if he/she is by the means. This will differ from teacher to teacher and will depend on the circumstances as well.

[3] Sacrifice (بَذْلٌ)

The teacher should be prepared to sacrifice his personal time and effort in training the student. Without this sacrifice, no development will take place in the student.

[4] Gentleness (رِفْقُهُ)

The teacher should teach with mercy, love and gentleness, as was mentioned previously. Harshness will breed contempt and dislike. The Prophet ﷺ said:

«مَنْ يُحْرَمَ الرِّفْقَ يُحْرَمَ الْخَيْرَ»

“Whoever is deprived of gentleness is deprived of goodness.”

He should also greet the students with a cheerful face and have an easy disposition.¹²

¹² *Al-Tibyān fī Ādāb Ḥamalāt al-Qur’ān*: 55.

[5] Humility (تَوَاضُعٌ)

The teacher should be humble with his students and not arrogant, harsh and boastful.

[6] Excellence and Distinction (إِحْسَانٌ)

The teacher should have excellence and distinction in all that they do: their speech, actions, teachings and guidance in all circumstances.

[7] Patience (صَبْرٌ)

The teacher should have patience with their students and not become restless and bothered by them.

[8] Forgiveness (الْغَفْرُ)

The students may be coarse, rude and seemingly disrespectful. The teacher should overlook their lapses and forgive them. Sheikh al-'Ubayd quotes and applauds Imam al-Shāfi'ī who said:

«الْكَيِّسُ الْعَاقِلُ هُوَ الْفَطِنُ الْمُتَعَافِلُ»

“The intelligent, wise one, is he who is aware, but feigns unawareness.”

TEXT:

عَلَى قَدْرِ صِدْقِ الْمَرْءِ تَبْقَى ظِلَالُهُ فَرَا حِمٌّ تَجِدُ تَصْدِيقَ ذَا آخِرِ الْعُمْرِ

98

TRANSLATION:

Based on the extent of the sincerity of a person will his legacy endure, so strive and you will find the truthfulness of this at the end of your life.

COMMENTARY:

We are encouraged to do as much good deeds as we possibly can. The rewards for these good deeds will be seen and reaped in the Hereafter. Allah says in the Qur'ān:

وَنَكْتُبُ مَا قَدَّمُوا وَآثَارَهُمْ

And We write down what (deeds) they have sent forth and their traces. Sūrah Yāsīn: 12.

This verse mentions two kinds of deeds. The first are those deeds that we “send forth” and will benefit us in the Hereafter e.g. our charities, prayers, acts of worship, etc. The second are those deeds that we leave behind in this world after death; these deeds continue benefitting us in the Hereafter e.g. continuous charity, building a mosque, planting a tree from which people benefit from its fruit or shade, digging a well from which people benefit, donating a copy of the Qur'ān that someone recites from, someone practicing on a portion of knowledge that you taught them etc. This is often referred to as our legacy.

In this line Sheikh al-‘Ubayd relates that the extent and vastness of one’s legacy is dependent on one’s sincerity. If one is sincere in his/her deeds, then they will be able to witness their legacy before they leave this world. By stating “at the end of your life”, he hints that this will only occur after a lifetime. By stating “so strive”, he encourages us to work hard because this will only happen after a lifetime of serious and hard work.

TEXT:

وَهَذَا قَصِيدِي فِي التَّرَحُّلِ قَدْ أَتَى وَفِي مِائَةٍ عَدًّا وَقَابِلُهُ بِالسَّتْرِ

99

TRANSLATION:

And this is my poem, composed while traveling; totaling 100 verses, so accept it with concealment (of its flaws).

COMMENTARY:

This poem was compiled by Sheikh al-'Ubayd in various lands while he travelled in the pursuit of knowledge. Sections of it was compiled in the ḥaram of Mecca, the ḥaram of Medina, India, Sana'a, Zabid, India, Egypt, USA, amongst other places.

The poem comprises 100 verses. The author requests that the reader overlooks the flaws of his compilation.

TEXT:

وَحَتَمُ نَظَائِي كَأَفْتَتَايَ أَوَّلًا لَكَ الْحَمْدُ يَا مَوْلَايَ ذَا الْجُودِ وَالْبِرِّ

100

TRANSLATION:

The conclusion of my poem is like its start, all praise is firstly due to You my Master, the Possessor of generosity and kindness.

COMMENTARY:

The author ends his poem in the same manner in which he started it i.e. with the praise of Allah. This is in accordance with the Qur'an, as Sūrat al-Ṣāffāt also ends with the praise of Allah. He furthermore mentions that lastly, he terminates the poem with the praise of Allah

because the last exclamation of those who enter Paradise will also be the praises of Allah:

وَاٰخِرُ دَعْوَاهُمْ اِنَّ الْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ رَبِّ الْعٰلَمِيْنَ

And the last of their (the people of Paradise) call is “Praise be to Allah, Lord of all the worlds.” Sūrah Yūnus ﷺ: 10.

Ijāzah for the Poem

Glory be to Allah, Lord of the worlds. He is the Most Merciful, the Extremely Merciful. May He send salutations upon our beloved master, Muḥammad, his family, his Companions, and all those who follow them.

Know that the Qurʾān is the greatest Book revealed, descended upon the most honourable of prophets, and that his nation is the most virtuous of all mankind. The most noble amongst this nation is the ambassador of the Qurʾān:

After having read and understanding this poem, I authorize him/her to read it, teach it and transmit it to others via me. I have grasped these lines directly from the author, Sheikh ‘Abd Allah ibn Ṣāliḥ ibn Muḥammad al-‘Ubayd al-Tamīmī.

Teacher’s Name:

Signature:

Date:

All praise is solely due to Allah, The Greatest. I advise the student to teach these etiquettes to others and request that he/she does not forget me in their pious supplications. May Allah send salutations and peace upon our beloved master, Muḥammad, his family, his Companions, and those who follow them.