

Niyah (Intention) For Seeking The *Ilm* Of *Deen* (Knowledge Of Islam)

FROM THE MALFUZAT OF MAWLANA MASEEHULLAH KHAN SHERWANI (Rahimahullah Ta'ala)

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“It is only those who have knowledge among His slaves that fear Allah...” Surah Fatir (35:28)

**Zaid ibn Arqam (R.A) reported that Rasulallah (sallal lahu alaihi wa sallam) supplicated:
“O Allah! I seek refuge in you from (such) knowledge which is of no benefit; from a heart devoid of your fear;
a self whose desires (for the pleasures of this world) are never ending; and a prayer which is not accepted”.**
(Transmitted by Muslim)

Hadrat Maseehul Ummah (rahmatullah alaihi) said:

O Students! Study as (the famous scholar and sage) Imam Ghazali (rahmatullah alaihi) had done! The honourable Imam used to study in the Religious Institute *Madrasa Nizamiyah* established by (the king) Nizam ul Mulk Tusi (alaihira rahmah).

One night, in disguise, Nizam ul Mulk went to survey the students in the *Madrasa* whilst they were busy studying their *kitab*s (books). He walked around the campus posing the same question to many a *talib e ilm* (seeker of knowledge i.e. student): ‘What is the purpose of your studies? What do you hope to achieve?’ One student replied: ‘My father is a *Qadi* (Judge), I hope to replace him when he retires.’ Another said: ‘My father is a *Wazir* (Minister), I hope to follow in his footsteps and also become a minister in the government.’ Each student enumerated his worldly motive and aspiration, much to the profound disappointment of the Nizam.

The Nizam thought to himself: ‘Knowledge of *Deen* being acquired for purely worldly motives, it may be best to close the *Madrasa*, and demolish the buildings!’

Lost in thought, the Nizam continued with his tour, suddenly he saw one *talib e ilm* with a lamp in front of him totally engrossed in his *kitab*s, unaware of the world around him! The dedication of the student brought a smile to the lips of the King and he addressed the student startling him: ‘Young lad! What are you reading?’ The student gave the name of the text he had been intently studying. The King then posed the question he had been asking all evening.

(Hadrat remarked – This reply is what I really want you to hear) –

The young scholar addressed the King: ‘I have recognised through my *aql* (intelligence) that surely there exists a (Supreme Being) who is our *Khaliq* (Creator) and *Malik* (Master/Owner). Common sense dictates that every Master has orders and commands to be obeyed by those under His rule’.

‘Without *ilm* (knowledge), it is neither possible to comprehend these *ahkamat* (commandments) nor is it possible to make *amal* (act and obey) upon them. This is the reason why I am here to study.’ The King’s sadness turned to joy when he heard this answer to his question.

The next morning the King informed his ministers about his investigative visit to the *Madrasa*: ‘All the students are there solely for their stomachs (i.e. only for this world) and I had intended to close the institute but due to one exception I have decided to keep it running. I found one true *talib e ilm* who was there only for the *Rada* of Allah (Pleasure of Allah).

Hadrat (rahmatullah alaihi) then asked: ‘Do you know who that one student was? That student was none other than Imam Ghazali (alaihira rahmah).’ (See footnote 1).

Hadrat then continued – People complain that in present day *Madaris e Arabia* (Islamic Arabic Institutes) many students are of no value and are just there to fill the classrooms and advertise the name of the school. This may be true, but surely there will always be a few like Imam Ghazali who will go on to become *khadim* of *deen* (sincere capable scholars serving Islam). So remember my advice (and I have heard this from my elders), not to be too selective when admitting pupils into the *madrasa*. If a pupil does not attend the classes regularly he is harming only himself, but at least he will hear and learn a few things (even though he will not become a capable scholar).

When after a few years this student will get a *sanad* (certificate of qualification) in his hand, this '*sanad*' will stop him from sinning openly. It will stop him from lewd and shameful pursuits like film shows etc. Even if he does go to the cinema he will hide his face and sit quietly in one corner. He will not inform anyone as to where he has been and he will definitely not encourage others to go. Whilst the one who has not spent a few years in a *madrasa* will unashamedly go to such shows, talk incessantly about them and even pay for others to go.

Have you seen the difference, the *talib e ilm* restricted the sin to himself and committed the wrong secretly whilst the other person not only involved others in sin (as well) but also sinned openly, making his crime very much more serious. People say that it is better to remain *jahil* (ignorant/unlearned) rather than to be such a (sinful) *talib e ilm* – understand that this is totally wrong (as illustrated in the example above, also the knowledge he possess will *InshaAllah* one day prod him onto the correct path and he will get the *tawfiq* to make *tawbah*).

Yes two things in a *talib e ilm* will surely make him evil: Firstly, if he is *shararati* (i.e. a mischief maker whose aim is to cause trouble) – and this includes acts like going on strike etc. Secondly, if he possesses *tama'* (greed for worldly things, for such a person will sell the *deen* for a few miserly coins). We find in the *hadith*, (Rasulullah *sallalahu alaihi wa sallam*) said: 'The *u'lama* (scholars) are the *umamah* (trustees) of *deen* (religion i.e. Islam), as long as they stay away from (the corrupt and evil) *umara* (evil rich influential people/political leaders). Once they get mixed up with the (evil) *umara* they are the robbers of *deen*.'

This reminds me of the story I heard from HadratWala (Hakim ul Ummah Mawlana Thanwi alaihir rahmah):

A prince came out at night for a walk in the cool night air, he had a priceless diamond upon him. It so happened that the diamond fell to the ground and got lost amongst the numerous stones. Despite a prolonged search the diamond could not be found! The prince ordered his servants to dig up all the earth and stones in that part of the ground where the precious diamond had fallen, and transport the earth to the royal palace.

The next morning on sifting through the large quantity of sand and stones the precious diamond was found...In the same way the supervisors of the *madaris* (Islamic institutes) have gathered a large number of all types of stones and a few amongst them will be diamonds, rubies and pearls who will light up the world due to their radiance. By that I mean the radiance (of their knowledge and piety) will contribute to the *islah* (spiritual rectification-*tazkiyah*) of (numerous souls) in this world. (*Miftahul Khair – Vol 2/No 11-12*)

Footnote 1 - (Hujjat ul Islam) Abu Hamid Muhammad ibn Muhammad Al-Ghazali (450 AH - 505 AH, Tus Khorasan) - Ibn al-Jawzi narrated in *al-Thabat 'Inda al-Mamat* ("Firmness at the Time of Death") from al-Ghazali's brother Ahmad: "On Monday [14 Jumada al-Akhira 505 Hijri (1111 AD)] at the time of the *Fajr* prayer my brother Abu Hamid made his ablution, prayed, then said: 'Bring me my shroud.' He took it, kissed it and put it on his eyes, saying: 'We hear and obey in readiness to enter the King's presence.' Then he stretched his legs, faced the *Qibla*, and passed away before sunrise – may Allah sanctify his soul!" It is related that al-Shadhili saw a dream in which Rasulullah (*sallalahu alaihi wa sallam*) pointed out al-Ghazali to Musa (*alaihis salam*) and 'Isa (*alaihis salam*) asking them: "Is there such a wise scholar in your communities?" to which they replied no.