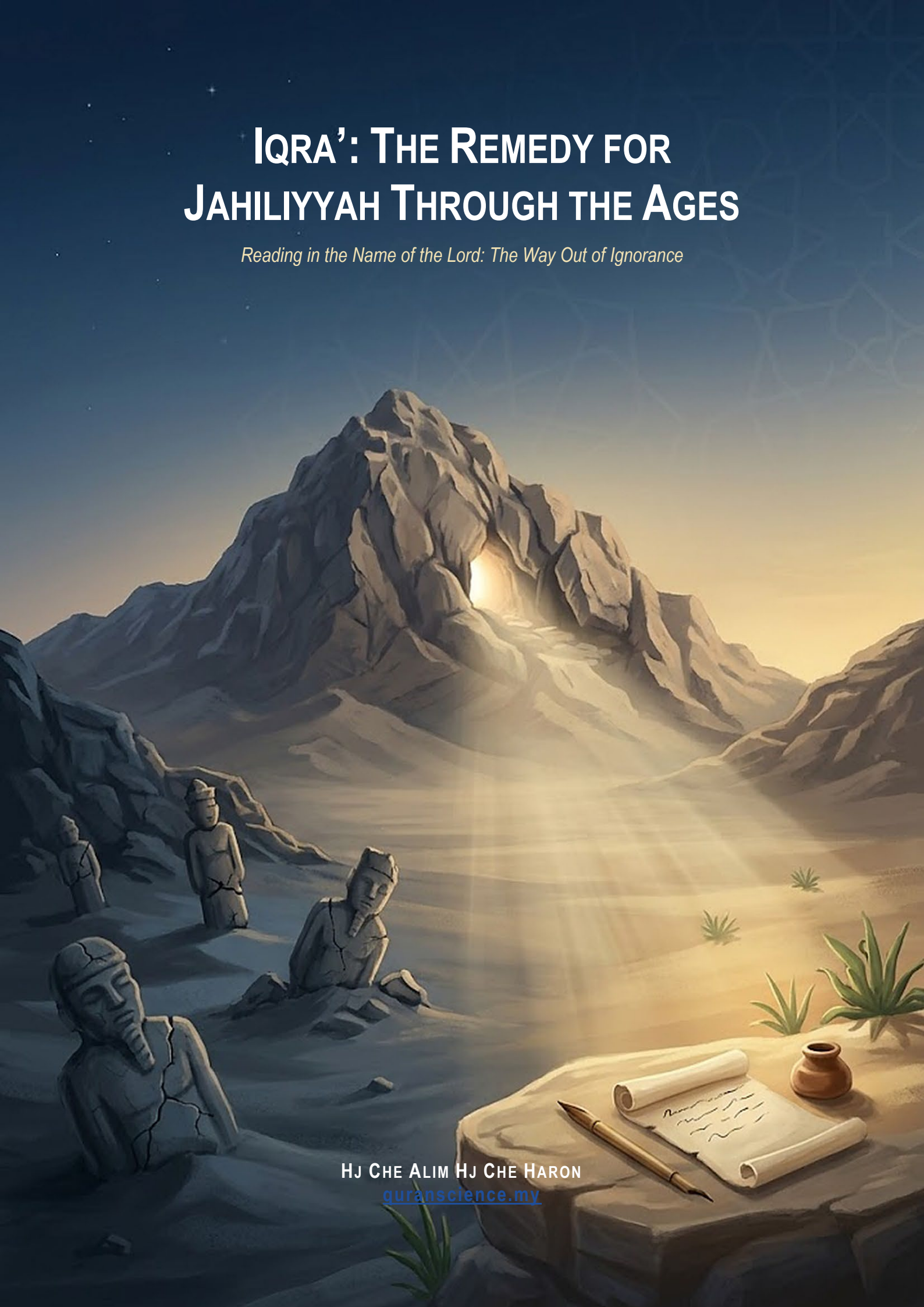
IQRA': THE REMEDY FOR JAHILIYYAH THROUGH THE AGES

Reading in the Name of the Lord: The Way Out of Ignorance



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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

IQRA': THE REMEDY FOR JAHILIYYAH THROUGH THE AGES

Reading in the Name of the Lord: The Way Out of Ignorance

ٱقۡرَأۡ بِٱسۡمِ رَبِّكَ ٱلَّذِي خَلَقَ

"Recite in the name of your Lord who created."
SURAH AL-'ALAQ 96:1

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

All praise is due to Allah, the Lord who commanded "Iqra'", who taught by the pen and taught man what he did not know. Blessings and peace be upon the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, the first person to receive the command to read from the heavens.

This eBook is specially dedicated to my beloved wife,

ZAHARAH MOHD LATIF;

my dear children,

MUHAMMAD HAFIZ, NOOR HAZWANI, ABDUL HAKIM, NOOR HIDAYAH, NOR AQILA and **NOR ATIQAH**;

and my sons- and daughters-in-law,

FAZILAH, MALEK, HANIN, FAIRIZAL and **FIRWAN**.

May Allah make us all readers who read in His name, and make this knowledge *'ilmun yuntafa'u bih* — knowledge that is benefited from.

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ABOUT THE COVER OF THIS EBOOK

The cover of this eBook depicts a journey from darkness to light. In the background rises a rocky mountain under the dawn sky — a reminder of **Jabal al-Nur**, where the Cave of Hira' lies and where the command "Iqra'" was first revealed. From the mouth of a cave on the mountainside a golden light streams down and illuminates the valley. In the sky, faint Islamic geometric star patterns can be seen — a sign that all knowledge shelters under tawhid.

In the lower left, the desert is still shrouded in dark shadows; cracked stone idols half-buried in the sand can be seen — a symbol of **jahiliyyah** collapsing when the light of knowledge arrives. In the lower right, the light falls on a rock bearing a **qalam** (pen), a written scroll and an inkpot, while green plants begin to grow around it — a symbol of knowledge that is written and preserved (Surah Al-'Alaq 96:4 and Surah Al-Qalam 68:1).

The rays of light spreading across the whole valley symbolise that Iqra' is not for one age only; it is the remedy **through the ages**. The night-blue that slowly turns into the gold of dawn symbolises the journey of a reader — from ignorance of Allah to knowing Him.

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SUPPORT & DONATIONS

Colour guide: green box = verses of the Qur'an; gold box = Hadith; blue box = scientific finding; grey box = athar / sayings of scholars. Underlined blue narrator names can be clicked to open the narrator's page on sunnah.com.

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IQRA': THE REMEDY FOR JAHILIYYAH THROUGH THE AGES

The first word that came down from the heavens to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ was not "fight", not "rule", and not even "pray". The first word was **Iqra' — Read**. It came down to an unlettered Prophet, in the midst of a society known in history as the society of **Jahiliyyah** (the Age of Ignorance).

Yet jahiliyyah in the language of the Qur'an does not merely mean "not knowing how to read". The pre-Islamic Arabs were famous for their eloquence, for poems hung on the Ka'bah and for their skill in trade. The real jahiliyyah is **ignorance of Allah**, which gives birth to injustice, tribal arrogance, oppression of the weak and laws that follow desires. That is why the Qur'an uses this term to describe an *attitude*, not merely an *age*:

SURAH AL-MA'IDAH 5:50

أَفَحُكْمَ ٱلْجَٰهِلِيَّةِ يَبْغُونَ ۚ وَمَنْ أَحْسَنُ مِنَ ٱللَّهِ حُكْمًا لِّقَوْمٍ يُوقِنُونَ ﴿٥٠﴾

Then is it the judgement of [the time of] ignorance they desire? But who is better than Allah in judgement for a people who are certain [in faith].

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/5:50

Imam Ibn Kathir explains that Allah censures whoever turns away from His judgement, which contains all good, and turns instead to the opinions, desires and conventions made by people — as the people of jahiliyyah did. In other words, jahiliyyah is any way of life that cuts people off from the guidance of their Lord, however advanced its civilisation. Tafsir Ibn Kathir 5:50

If jahiliyyah is a disease that can recur in every age, then its cure must also be ever relevant. The first five verses of Surah Al-'Alaq give that prescription: **reading in the name of the Lord** (purpose), **knowing one's own origin** (awareness), **the Most Generous Lord** (connection), **al-Qalam** (medium), and **the knowledge Allah teaches** (returning to Him). These five keys form the five subtopics of this eBook.

SURAH AL-'ALAQ 96:1–5

ٱقْرَأْ بِٱسْمِ رَبِّكَ ٱلَّذِى خَلَقَ ﴿١﴾

Recite in the name of your Lord who created.

خَلَقَ ٱلْإِنسَٰنَ مِنْ عَلَقٍ ﴿٢﴾

Created man from a clinging substance.

ٱقْرَأْ وَرَبُّكَ ٱلْأَكْرَمُ ﴿٣﴾

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Recite, and your Lord is the most Generous.

ٱلَّذِى عَلَّمَ بِٱلْقَلَمِ ﴿٤﴾

Who taught by the pen?

عَلَّمَ ٱلْإِنسَٰنَ مَا لَمْ يَعْلَمْ ﴿٥﴾

Taught man that which he knew not.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/96:1-5

Note: Scientific findings in this eBook are presented as evidence of harmony, not to "prove" the truth of the Qur'an. The truth of revelation stands on its own; science is provisional and always under revision.

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READING IN THE NAME OF THE LORD AS THE HIGHEST PURPOSE

SURAH AL-'ALAQ 96:1

ٱقۡرَأۡ بِٱسۡمِ رَبِّكَ ٱلَّذِي خَلَقَ ١

Recite in the name of your Lord who created.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/96:1

EXPLANATION OF THE VERSE

The first command of revelation is not merely "read", but "read **in the name of your Lord**". The letter *ba'* in *bismi* is understood by the exegetes as *ba' al-isti'anah* and *al-musahabah* — reading while seeking Allah's help and always accompanied by His name. Reading is not left value-free; from the very first verse it is tied to the highest goal: knowing Allah and devoting oneself to Him.

Notice also the attribute of Allah that is chosen: *alladhi khalaq* — "who created". The object of creation is not mentioned, as if it includes everything. So the whole universe becomes a "book" that can be read: the *qawliyyah* signs (revelation) and the *kawniyyah* signs (the universe) both lead to the same Creator.

COMMENTARY OF RESPECTED SCHOLARS

Imam Ibn Kathir states that these were the first verses of the Qur'an to be revealed; they are the first mercy Allah bestowed on His servants and the first blessing He granted them. In them is a reminder of the beginning of man's creation, and that among Allah's generosity is that He taught man what he did not know. Tafsir Ibn Kathir 96:1

Shaykh 'Abd al-Rahman al-Sa'di explains that this surah was the first revealed to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ at the beginning of prophethood, when he did not yet know what the Book was or what faith was.

Then Jibril عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ came with the message and commanded him to read. Tafsir al-Sa'di 96:1

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 3

حَدَّثَنَا يَحْيَى بْنُ بُكَيْرٍ، قَالَ حَدَّثَنَا اللَّيْثُ، عَنْ عُقَيْلٍ، عَنِ ابْنِ شِهَابٍ، عَنْ عُرْوَةَ بْنِ الزُّبَيْرِ، عَنْ عَائِشَةَ أُمِّ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ، أَنَّهَا قَالَتْ أَوَّلُ مَا بُدِئَ بِهِ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم مِنَ الْوَحْيِ الرُّؤْيَا الصَّالِحَةُ فِي النَّوْمِ، فَكَانَ لاَ يَرَى رُؤْيَا إِلاَّ جَاءَتْ مِثْلَ فَلَقِ الصُّبْحِ، ثُمَّ حُبِّبَ إِلَيْهِ الْخَلاَءُ، وَكَانَ يَخْلُو بِغَارِ حِرَاءٍ فَيَتَحَنَّثُ فِيهِ ـ وَهُوَ التَّعَبُّدُ ـ اللَّيَالِيَ ذَوَاتِ الْعَدَدِ قَبْلَ أَنْ يَنْزِعَ إِلَى أَهْلِهِ، وَيَتَزَوَّدُ لِذَلِكَ، ثُمَّ يَرْجِعُ إِلَى خَدِيجَةَ، فَيَتَزَوَّدُ لِمِثْلِهَا، حَتَّى جَاءَهُ

الْحَقَّ وَهُوَ فِي غَارِ حِرَاءٍ، فَجَاءَهُ الْمَلَكُ فَقَالَ اقْرَأْ. قَالَ " مَا أَنَا بِقَارِئٍ ". قَالَ " فَأَخَذَنِي فَغَطَّنِي حَتَّى بَلَغَ مِنِّي الْجَهْدَ، ثُمَّ أَرْسَلَنِي فَقَالَ اقْرَأْ. قُلْتُ مَا أَنَا بِقَارِئٍ. فَأَخَذَنِي فَغَطَّنِي الثَّانِيَةَ حَتَّى بَلَغَ مِنِّي الْجَهْدَ، ثُمَّ أَرْسَلَنِي فَقَالَ اقْرَأْ. فَقُلْتُ مَا أَنَا بِقَارِئٍ. فَأَخَذَنِي فَغَطَّنِي الثَّالِثَةَ، ثُمَّ أَرْسَلَنِي فَقَالَ {اقْرَأْ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ * خَلَقَ الإِنْسَانَ مِنْ عَلَقٍ * اقْرَأْ وَرَبُّكَ الأَكْرَمُ} ". فَرَجَعَ بِهَا رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم يَرْجُفُ فُؤَادُهُ، فَدَخَلَ عَلَى خَدِيجَةَ بِنْتِ خُوَيْلِدٍ رضى الله عنها فَقَالَ " زَمِّلُونِي زَمِّلُونِي ". فَزَمَّلُوهُ حَتَّى ذَهَبَ عَنْهُ الرَّوْعُ، فَقَالَ لِخَدِيجَةَ وَأَخْبَرَهَا الْخَبَرَ " لَقَدْ خَشِيتُ عَلَى نَفْسِي ". فَقَالَتْ خَدِيجَةُ كَلاَّ وَاللَّهِ مَا يُخْزِيكَ اللَّهُ أَبَدًا، إِنَّكَ لَتَصِلُ الرَّحِمَ، وَتَحْمِلُ الْكَلَّ، وَتَكْسِبُ الْمَعْدُومَ، وَتَقْرِي الضَّيْفَ، وَتُعِينُ عَلَى نَوَائِبِ الْحَقِّ. فَانْطَلَقَتْ بِهِ خَدِيجَةُ حَتَّى أَتَتْ بِهِ وَرَقَةَ بْنَ نَوْفَلِ بْنِ أَسَدِ بْنِ عَبْدِ الْعُزَّى ابْنَ عَمِّ خَدِيجَةَ ـ وَكَانَ امْرَأً تَنَصَّرَ فِي الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ، وَكَانَ يَكْتُبُ الْكِتَابَ الْعِبْرَانِيَّ، فَيَكْتُبُ مِنَ الإِنْجِيلِ بِالْعِبْرَانِيَّةِ مَا شَاءَ اللَّهُ أَنْ يَكْتُبَ، وَكَانَ شَيْخًا كَبِيرًا قَدْ عَمِيَ ـ فَقَالَتْ لَهُ خَدِيجَةُ يَا ابْنَ عَمِّ اسْمَعْ مِنَ ابْنِ أَخِيكَ. فَقَالَ لَهُ وَرَقَةُ يَا ابْنَ أَخِي مَاذَا تَرَى فَأَخْبَرَهُ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم خَبَرَ مَا رَأَى. فَقَالَ لَهُ وَرَقَةُ هَذَا النَّامُوسُ الَّذِي نَزَّلَ اللَّهُ عَلَى مُوسَى صلى الله عليه وسلم يَا لَيْتَنِي فِيهَا جَذَعًا، لَيْتَنِي أَكُونُ حَيًّا إِذْ يُخْرِجُكَ قَوْمُكَ. فَقَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم " أَوَمُخْرِجِيَّ هُمْ ". قَالَ نَعَمْ، لَمْ يَأْتِ رَجُلٌ قَطُّ بِمِثْلِ مَا جِئْتَ بِهِ إِلاَّ عُودِيَ، وَإِنْ يُدْرِكْنِي يَوْمُكَ أَنْصُرْكَ نَصْرًا مُؤَزَّرًا. ثُمَّ لَمْ يَنْشَبْ وَرَقَةُ أَنْ تُوُفِّيَ وَفَتَرَ الْوَحْيُ.

TRANSLATION:

From 'A'ishah, Mother of the Believers رضى الله عنها, who said: The beginning of the revelation that came to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ was true dreams in sleep. He never saw a dream except that it came true like the brightness of daybreak. Then seclusion was made beloved to him. He would seclude himself in the Cave of Hira' and worship there (tahannuth) for a number of nights before returning to his family, taking provisions for that. Then he would return to Khadijah and take provisions for a similar period, until the truth came to him while he was in the Cave of Hira'. The angel came to him and said: "Read!" He replied: "I am not a reader." He said: "Then he took hold of me and squeezed me hard until I was exhausted, then released me and said: 'Read!' I said: 'I am not a reader.' Then he took hold of me and squeezed me a second time until I was exhausted, then released me and said: 'Read!' I said: 'I am not a reader.' Then he took hold of me and squeezed me a third time, then released me and said: 'Read in the name of your Lord who created. Created

man from a clinging substance. Read, and your Lord is the Most Generous.'" So the Messenger of Allah ﷺ returned with these verses, his heart trembling, and went in to Khadijah bint Khuwaylid رضى الله عنها and said: "Cover me, cover me." They covered him until his fear left him. He told Khadijah what had happened and said: "I fear for myself." Khadijah said: "Never! By Allah, Allah will never disgrace you. You maintain the ties of kinship, carry the burdens of the weak, give to the destitute, honour the guest and help those afflicted by calamities in the cause of truth." Then Khadijah took him to Waraqah ibn Nawfal ibn Asad ibn 'Abd al-'Uzza, Khadijah's cousin — a man who had become a Christian in the time of jahiliyyah, who could write in Hebrew and would copy from the Gospel in Hebrew as much as Allah willed, and who was an old man who had become blind. Khadijah said to him: "O my cousin, listen to your nephew." Waraqah asked: "O my nephew, what have you seen?" The Messenger of Allah ﷺ told him what he had seen. Waraqah said: "This is al-Namus (Jibril) whom Allah sent down to Musa. I wish I were young then; I wish I would be alive when your people drive you out." The Messenger of Allah ﷺ asked: "Will they drive me out?" Waraqah replied: "Yes. Never has a man come with what you have brought except that he was treated with hostility. If I live to see your day, I will support you with strong support." Not long afterwards Waraqah died, and the revelation paused for a while.

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from Yahya ibn Bukayr, from al-Layth ibn Sa'd, from 'Uqayl ibn Khalid, from Ibn Shihab al-Zuhri, from 'Urwah ibn al-Zubair, from 'A'ishah رضى الله عنها.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of the Beginning of Revelation (Bad' al-Wahy), Hadith No. 3.

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari (also narrated by Imam Muslim, No. 160).

Source: https://sunnah.com/bukhari:3

COMMENTARY ON THE HADITH OF THE BEGINNING OF REVELATION

Imam Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalani in *Fath al-Bari* quotes the views of scholars on the wisdom of Jibril عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ squeezing the Messenger of Allah ﷺ hard three times: to empty his attention of everything else and focus it completely on what was about to be conveyed, and to show the seriousness and weight of the trust of revelation. The lesson is clear — great knowledge requires a heart that is fully present.

The reply of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, "*ma ana bi qari'*" (I am not a reader), shows that the true ability to read comes from Allah. Then see how Khadijah رضى الله عنها comforted him: not by mentioning his cleverness, but by mentioning his **character** — maintaining ties of kinship, helping the weak, honouring guests. Here the beginning of Iqra' meets good character; reading in the name of the Lord gives birth to a person who cares for people.

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 1

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حَدَّثَنَا الْحُمَيْدِيُّ عَبْدُ اللَّهِ بْنُ الزُّبَيْرِ ، قَالَ : حَدَّثَنَا سُفْيَانُ ، قَالَ : حَدَّثَنَا يَحْيَى بْنُ سَعِيدٍ الْأَنْصَارِيُّ ، قَالَ : أَخْبَرَنِي مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ إِبْرَاهِيمَ التَّيْمِيُّ ، أَنَّهُ سَمِعَ عَلْقَمَةَ بْنَ وَقَّاصٍ اللَّيْثِيَّ ، يَقُولُ : سَمِعْتُ عُمَرَ بْنَ الْخَطَّابِ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ عَلَى الْمِنْبَرِ، قَالَ : سَمِعْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ، يَقُولُ : " إِنَّمَا الْأَعْمَالُ بِالنِّيَّاتِ، وَإِنَّمَا لِكُلِّ امْرِئٍ مَا نَوَى، فَمَنْ كَانَتْ هِجْرَتُهُ إِلَى دُنْيَا يُصِيبُهَا أَوْ إِلَى امْرَأَةٍ يَنْكِحُهَا، فَهِجْرَتُهُ إِلَى مَا هَاجَرَ إِلَيْهِ "

TRANSLATION:

'Alqamah ibn Waqqas al-Laythi said: I heard 'Umar ibn al-Khattab رضى الله عنه say on the pulpit: I heard the Messenger of Allah ﷺ say: "Actions are only by intentions, and every person shall have only what he intended. So whoever's emigration was for a worldly gain he seeks, or for a woman he wishes to marry, then his emigration is for what he emigrated for."

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from al-Humaydi 'Abdullah ibn al-Zubair, from Sufyan ibn 'Uyaynah, from Yahya ibn Sa'id al-Ansari, from Muhammad ibn Ibrahim al-Taymi, from 'Alqamah ibn Waqqas al-Laythi, from 'Umar ibn al-Khattab رضى الله عنه.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of the Beginning of Revelation, chapter: how the revelation began to come to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, Hadith No. 1.

GRADE: SAHIH — the opening hadith of Sahih al-Bukhari; also narrated by Imam Muslim (No. 1907).

Source: https://sunnah.com/bukhari:1

COMMENTARY ON THE HADITH OF INTENTION

Imam al-Bukhari deliberately opened his *Sahih* with this hadith, and **'Abd al-Rahman ibn Mahdi** said that whoever wishes to write a book should begin it with this hadith, as a reminder to students of knowledge to correct their intention. **Imam al-Shafi'i** stated that this hadith enters into seventy chapters of fiqh, as quoted by **Imam al-Nawawi** in his commentary on *al-Arba'in*. In the context of Iqra', this hadith is the practical explanation of "in the name of your Lord": the same reading can become worship or merely a worldly gain, depending on the intention of the reader.

SCIENTIFIC FINDING: READING RESHAPES THE BRAIN

Dehaene and colleagues (2010) scanned the brains of 63 adults with different levels of literacy — some illiterate, some who learned to read as adults, and some literate since childhood. They found that literacy strengthens the response of the left fusiform region to writing, extends visual responses down to the primary visual cortex (V1), and strengthens the processing of speech sounds. More importantly, most of these changes occurred even when a person began learning to read as an adult. The command "Iqra'", which came

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to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ at the age of forty, is in harmony with the fact that the human brain is never too old to be shaped by reading.

STUDY REFERENCE:

Dehaene S et al. (2010). How learning to read changes the cortical networks for vision and language. Science 330(6009):1359–1364. https://doi.org/10.1126/science.1194140

THE BEGINNING OF THE JOURNEY TO KNOW THE LORD

SURAH AL-'ALAQ 96:2

خَلَقَ ٱلْإِنسَٰنَ مِنْ عَلَقٍ ۝٢

Created man from a clinging substance.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/96:2

EXPLANATION OF THE VERSE

After introducing Allah as "the One who created" in general, the second verse immediately singles out one creation: **man**, and his origin from *'alaq* — something that clings and depends. It is as if Allah says: "Begin your reading by reading yourself." The first reading material handed to man is the story of his own creation, a reminder that he began from something weak and wholly dependent on his Lord.

COMMENTARY OF RESPECTED SCHOLARS

Imam Ibn Kathir explains that this verse contains a reminder of the beginning of man's creation from *'alaqah*, and that among Allah's generosity is that He honoured a creature with such a beginning with knowledge — the honour that distinguished Adam عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ from the angels. The exegetes also explain that man is mentioned specifically after creation in general because it is man who is honoured and charged with revelation. Tafsir Ibn Kathir 96:2 · Tafsir al-Qurtubi 96:2

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 3208

حَدَّثَنَا الْحَسَنُ بْنُ الرَّبِيعِ، حَدَّثَنَا أَبُو الأَحْوَصِ، عَنِ الأَعْمَشِ، عَنْ زَيْدِ بْنِ وَهْبٍ، قَالَ عَبْدُ اللَّهِ حَدَّثَنَا رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم وَهْوَ الصَّادِقُ الْمَصْدُوقُ قَالَ " إِنَّ أَحَدَكُمْ يُجْمَعُ خَلْقُهُ فِي بَطْنِ أُمِّهِ أَرْبَعِينَ يَوْمًا، ثُمَّ يَكُونُ عَلَقَةً مِثْلَ ذَلِكَ، ثُمَّ يَكُونُ مُضْغَةً مِثْلَ ذَلِكَ، ثُمَّ يَبْعَثُ اللَّهُ مَلَكًا، فَيُؤْمَرُ بِأَرْبَعِ كَلِمَاتٍ، وَيُقَالُ لَهُ اكْتُبْ عَمَلَهُ وَرِزْقَهُ وَأَجَلَهُ وَشَقِيٌّ أَوْ سَعِيدٌ. ثُمَّ يُنْفَخُ فِيهِ الرُّوحُ، فَإِنَّ الرَّجُلَ مِنْكُمْ لَيَعْمَلُ حَتَّى مَا يَكُونُ بَيْنَهُ وَبَيْنَ الْجَنَّةِ إِلاَّ ذِرَاعٌ، فَيَسْبِقُ عَلَيْهِ كِتَابُهُ، فَيَعْمَلُ بِعَمَلِ أَهْلِ النَّارِ، وَيَعْمَلُ حَتَّى مَا يَكُونُ بَيْنَهُ وَبَيْنَ النَّارِ إِلاَّ ذِرَاعٌ، فَيَسْبِقُ عَلَيْهِ الْكِتَابُ، فَيَعْمَلُ بِعَمَلِ أَهْلِ الْجَنَّةِ ".

TRANSLATION:

Zayd ibn Wahb said: 'Abdullah (ibn Mas'ud) رضى الله عنه said: The Messenger of Allah ﷺ — and he is the truthful and the believed — told us: "The creation of each one of you is gathered in his mother's womb for

forty days, then he becomes an 'alaqah for a similar period, then a mudghah (lump of flesh) for a similar period. Then Allah sends an angel who is commanded with four words, and it is said to him: Write his deeds, his provision, his lifespan, and whether he will be wretched or happy. Then the soul is breathed into him. Indeed one of you may do deeds until there is only a cubit between him and Paradise, then what has been written overtakes him and he does the deeds of the people of the Fire. And (another) may do deeds until there is only a cubit between him and the Fire, then what has been written overtakes him and he does the deeds of the people of Paradise."

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from al-Hasan ibn al-Rabi', from Abu al-Ahwas, from al-A'mash, from Zayd ibn Wahb, from 'Abdullah ibn Mas'ud رضى الله عنه.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of the Beginning of Creation, chapter on the mention of the angels, Hadith No. 3208.

GRADE: SAHIH — muttafaq 'alayh (also in Sahih Muslim, No. 2643); the fourth hadith of al-Arba'in al-Nawawiyyah.

Source: https://sunnah.com/bukhari:3208

COMMENTARY ON THE HADITH OF THE STAGES OF CREATION

Ibn Rajab al-Hanbali in *Jami' al-'Ulum wa al-Hikam* (commentary on the fourth hadith of al-Arba'in) explains this hadith at length, including the stages of *nutfah*, *'alaqah* and *mudghah*, then stresses its greatest lesson: deeds are judged by their endings, so a believer must not be deceived by his deeds and must always ask for a good ending (husn al-khatimah). Knowledge of one's origin leads to knowledge of one's end — and both bring man back to Allah.

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 1385

حَدَّثَنَا آدَمُ، حَدَّثَنَا ابْنُ أَبِي ذِئْبٍ، عَنِ الزُّهْرِيِّ، عَنْ أَبِي سَلَمَةَ بْنِ عَبْدِ الرَّحْمَنِ، عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ ـ رضى الله عنه ـ قَالَ قَالَ النَّبِيُّ صلى الله عليه وسلم " كُلُّ مَوْلُودٍ يُولَدُ عَلَى الْفِطْرَةِ، فَأَبَوَاهُ يُهَوِّدَانِهِ أَوْ يُنَصِّرَانِهِ أَوْ يُمَجِّسَانِهِ، كَمَثَلِ الْبَهِيمَةِ تُنْتَجُ الْبَهِيمَةَ، هَلْ تَرَى فِيهَا جَدْعَاءَ ."

TRANSLATION:

From Abu Hurayrah رضى الله عنه, who said: The Prophet ﷺ said: "Every child is born upon the fitrah. Then his parents make him a Jew, a Christian or a Magian; just as an animal gives birth to a perfect young one — do you see any part of it cut off?"

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from Adam ibn Abi Iyas, from Ibn Abi Dhi'b, from al-Zuhri, from Abu Salamah ibn 'Abd al-Rahman, from Abu Hurayrah رضى الله عنه.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of Funerals, chapter on what has been said about the children of the polytheists, Hadith No. 1385.

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari (also Sahih Muslim, No. 2658).

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Source: https://sunnah.com/bukhari:1385

The scholars explain that *fitrah* is the natural readiness to know and accept tawhid. This is in harmony with the words of Allah in Surah Ar-Rum 30:30. So the journey of knowing the Lord is really a journey of *returning* to the original fitrah — removing the layers of jahiliyyah that cover it.

"MAN 'ARAFA NAFSAHU FAQAD 'ARAFA RABBAHU"

مَنْ عَرَفَ نَفْسَهُ فَقَدْ عَرَفَ رَبَّهُ

The saying "*Whoever knows himself knows his Lord*" is very famous in the world of Sufism and is often quoted as if it were a saying of the Prophet ﷺ. For scholarly accuracy, it must be stated honestly that **it is not a hadith of the Prophet ﷺ**:

- **Abu al-Muzaffar al-Sam'ani** — as quoted by **al-Sakhawi** in *al-Maqasid al-Hasanah* — stated that it is not known as a marfu' hadith (from the Prophet ﷺ), but is only narrated as the words of **Yahya ibn Mu'adh al-Razi**, an ascetic figure.
- **Imam al-Nawawi** said: "*Laysa bi thabit*" (it is not established), and this view was agreed with by **al-Suyuti**.
- **Ibn Taymiyyah** judged it fabricated (*mawdu'*) as a hadith, as quoted by **Mulla 'Ali al-Qari** in his book *al-Mawdu'at*.
- **Shaykh al-Albani** in *al-Silsilah al-Da'ifah* (vol. 1) stated: "*La asla lah*" — it has no basis (as a hadith).

However, its **meaning** can be understood in a way that agrees with the Qur'an, and this is what many scholars have done. When a person knows himself as a creature that is **weak, needy, dependent and newly originated**, he will know his Lord as **the All-Strong, the Free of all needs, the Self-Subsisting and the First**. Knowing oneself is a door, not the destination. The Qur'an itself invites man to read himself:

SURAH ADH-DHARIYAT 51:20–21

وَفِي ٱلْأَرْضِ ءَايَٰتٌ لِّلْمُوقِنِينَ ﴿٢٠﴾

And on the earth are signs for the certain [in faith].

وَفِىٓ أَنفُسِكُمْ ۚ أَفَلَا تُبْصِرُونَ ﴿٢١﴾

And in yourselves. Then will you not see?

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/51:20-21

Imam Ibn Kathir explains that within man himself are signs that show the wisdom of his Creator — the variety of languages, skin colours, minds and abilities, and the wondrous arrangement of the body's limbs. Tafsir Ibn Kathir 51:21

SURAH FUSSILAT 41:53

سَنُرِيهِمْ ءَايَٰتِنَا فِى ٱلْءَافَاقِ وَفِىٓ أَنفُسِهِمْ حَتَّىٰ يَتَبَيَّنَ لَهُمْ أَنَّهُ ٱلْحَقُّ ۗ أَوَلَمْ يَكْفِ بِرَبِّكَ أَنَّهُۥ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَىْءٍ شَهِيدٌ ﴿٥٣﴾

We will show them Our signs in the horizons and within themselves until it becomes clear to them that it is the truth. But is it not sufficient concerning your Lord that He is, over all things, a Witness.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/41:53

This verse brings together two "books": *al-afaq* (the horizons of the universe) and *anfusihim* (people themselves). Both are promised to keep revealing signs of the truth — a promise that makes every scientific discovery about the universe and the human body reading material that leads to Allah.

SURAH AL-HASHR 59:19

وَلَا تَكُونُوا۟ كَٱلَّذِينَ نَسُوا۟ ٱللَّهَ فَأَنسَىٰهُمْ أَنفُسَهُمْ ۚ أُو۟لَٰٓئِكَ هُمُ ٱلْفَٰسِقُونَ ﴿١٩﴾

And be not like those who forgot Allah, so He made them forget themselves. Those are the defiantly disobedient.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/59:19

This verse is the other side of the coin, and it is more precise than the Sufi saying above: **whoever forgets Allah, Allah makes him forget himself**. **Imam Ibn Kathir** explains that they were made to forget doing the righteous deeds that would benefit them. This is the reality of jahiliyyah: ignorance of Allah gives birth to ignorance of oneself. Tafsir Ibn Kathir 59:19

HADITH — SAHIH MUSLIM, NO. 2577A (HADITH QUDSI)

حَدَّثَنَا عَبْدُ اللَّهِ بْنُ عَبْدِ الرَّحْمَنِ بْنِ بَهْرَامَ الدَّارِمِيُّ، حَدَّثَنَا مَرْوَانُ، - يَعْنِي ابْنَ مُحَمَّدٍ الدِّمَشْقِيَّ - حَدَّثَنَا سَعِيدُ بْنُ عَبْدِ الْعَزِيزِ، عَنْ رَبِيعَةَ بْنِ يَزِيدَ، عَنْ أَبِي إِدْرِيسَ الْخَوْلَانِيِّ، عَنْ أَبِي ذَرٍّ، عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صلى الله عليه وسلم فِيمَا رَوَى عَنِ اللَّهِ، تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى أَنَّهُ قَالَ " يَا عِبَادِي إِنِّي حَرَّمْتُ الظُّلْمَ عَلَى نَفْسِي وَجَعَلْتُهُ بَيْنَكُمْ مُحَرَّمًا فَلاَ تَظَالَمُوا يَا عِبَادِي كُلُّكُمْ ضَالٌّ إِلاَّ

مَنْ هَدَيْتُهُ فَاسْتَهْدُونِي أَهْدِكُمْ يَا عِبَادِي كُلُّكُمْ جَائِعٌ إِلاَّ مَنْ أَطْعَمْتُهُ فَاسْتَطْعِمُونِي أُطْعِمْكُمْ يَا عِبَادِي كُلُّكُمْ عَارٍ إِلاَّ مَنْ كَسَوْتُهُ فَاسْتَكْسُونِي أَكْسُكُمْ يَا عِبَادِي إِنَّكُمْ تُخْطِئُونَ بِاللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ وَأَنَا أَغْفِرُ الذُّنُوبَ جَمِيعًا فَاسْتَغْفِرُونِي أَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ يَا عِبَادِي إِنَّكُمْ لَنْ تَبْلُغُوا ضُرِّي فَتَضُرُّونِي وَلَنْ تَبْلُغُوا نَفْعِي فَتَنْفَعُونِي يَا عِبَادِي لَوْ أَنَّ أَوَّلَكُمْ وَآخِرَكُمْ وَإِنْسَكُمْ وَجِنَّكُمْ كَانُوا عَلَى أَتْقَى قَلْبِ رَجُلٍ وَاحِدٍ مِنْكُمْ مَا زَادَ ذَلِكَ فِي مُلْكِي شَيْئًا يَا عِبَادِي لَوْ أَنَّ أَوَّلَكُمْ وَآخِرَكُمْ وَإِنْسَكُمْ وَجِنَّكُمْ كَانُوا عَلَى أَفْجَرِ قَلْبِ رَجُلٍ وَاحِدٍ مَا نَقَصَ ذَلِكَ مِنْ مُلْكِي شَيْئًا يَا عِبَادِي لَوْ أَنَّ أَوَّلَكُمْ وَآخِرَكُمْ وَإِنْسَكُمْ وَجِنَّكُمْ قَامُوا فِي صَعِيدٍ وَاحِدٍ فَسَأَلُونِي فَأَعْطَيْتُ كُلَّ إِنْسَانٍ مَسْأَلَتَهُ مَا نَقَصَ ذَلِكَ مِمَّا عِنْدِي إِلاَّ كَمَا يَنْقُصُ الْمِخْيَطُ إِذَا أُدْخِلَ الْبَحْرَ يَا عِبَادِي إِنَّمَا هِيَ أَعْمَالُكُمْ أُحْصِيهَا لَكُمْ ثُمَّ أُوَفِّيكُمْ إِيَّاهَا فَمَنْ وَجَدَ خَيْرًا فَلْيَحْمَدِ اللَّهَ وَمَنْ وَجَدَ غَيْرَ ذَلِكَ فَلاَ يَلُومَنَّ إِلاَّ نَفْسَهُ " . قَالَ سَعِيدٌ كَانَ أَبُو إِدْرِيسَ الْخَوْلاَنِيُّ إِذَا حَدَّثَ بِهَذَا الْحَدِيثِ جَثَا عَلَى رُكْبَتَيْهِ .

TRANSLATION:

From Abu Dharr رضى الله عنه, from the Prophet ﷺ, in what he narrated from Allah, Blessed and Exalted, that

He said: "O My servants, I have forbidden injustice for Myself and have made it forbidden among you, so do not wrong one another. O My servants, all of you are astray except whom I guide, so seek guidance from Me and I will guide you. O My servants, all of you are hungry except whom I feed, so seek food from Me and I will feed you. O My servants, all of you are naked except whom I clothe, so seek clothing from Me and I will clothe you. O My servants, you err by night and by day, and I forgive all sins, so seek forgiveness from Me and I will forgive you. O My servants, you will never be able to harm Me so as to harm Me, and you will never be able to benefit Me so as to benefit Me. O My servants, if the first of you and the last of you, your humans and your jinn, were all as pious as the most pious heart of any one of you, that would not increase My dominion in anything. O My servants, if the first of you and the last of you, your humans and your jinn, were all as wicked as the most wicked heart of any one of you, that would not decrease My dominion in anything. O My servants, if the first of you and the last of you, your humans and your jinn, were to stand on one plain and ask of Me, and I gave everyone what he asked, that would not decrease what I have except as a needle decreases (the sea) when dipped into the sea. O My servants, it is only your deeds that I count for you, then I repay you for them in full. So whoever finds good, let him praise Allah; and whoever finds other than that, let him blame no one but himself." Sa'id (ibn 'Abd al-'Aziz) said: When Abu Idris al-Khawlani narrated this hadith, he would kneel on his knees.

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam Muslim: from 'Abdullah ibn 'Abd al-Rahman al-Darimi, from Marwan ibn Muhammad al-Dimashqi, from Sa'id ibn 'Abd al-'Aziz, from Rabi'ah ibn Yazid, from Abu Idris al-Khawlani, from Abu Dharr al-Ghifari رضى الله عنه.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam Muslim in Sahih Muslim, Book of Virtue, Good Manners and Joining the Ties of Kinship, chapter on the prohibition of injustice, Hadith No. 2577a.

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GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih Muslim; the 24th hadith of al-Arba'in al-Nawawiyyah.
Source: https://sunnah.com/muslim:2577a

COMMENTARY ON THE HADITH QUDSI OF ABU DHARR

This hadith is the clearest "mirror" for knowing oneself: *all of you are astray… hungry… naked… err by day and night*. Each human weakness is paired with an attribute of Allah's perfection — the One who guides, feeds, clothes and forgives. This is the correct meaning of "knowing oneself and then knowing the Lord". **Ibn Rajab al-Hanbali** in *Jami' al-'Ulum wa al-Hikam* (commentary on the 24th hadith) quotes **Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal** as saying that there is no hadith more noble for the people of Sham than this one, and he explains how this hadith contains great principles of tawhid and of proper conduct towards Allah.

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READING TO CONNECT, NOT TO ISOLATE

SURAH AL-'ALAQ 96:3

ٱقۡرَأۡ وَرَبُّكَ ٱلۡأَكۡرَمُ ٣

Recite, and your Lord is the most Generous.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/96:3

EXPLANATION OF THE VERSE

The command *Iqra'* is repeated a second time, now accompanied by the attribute of Allah *al-Akram* — the Most Generous, in the superlative form: He is more generous than all who are generous. Generosity by its nature **flows to others**; it cannot exist in isolation. So reading that is attributed to the Most Generous Lord should produce generous readers too — generous with their knowledge, their time and their compassion.

True knowledge connects: it connects the servant with his Lord, people with people, and generation with generation. Corrupted knowledge, by contrast, isolates — breeding intellectual arrogance, contempt for ordinary people, or worse, being used to deceive them. The Qur'an itself states that mankind was made into nations "*li ta'arafu*" — so that they may know one another (49:13).

COMMENTARY OF RESPECTED SCHOLARS

Imam Ibn Kathir states that among Allah's generosity is that He taught man what he did not know, and so honoured and ennobled him with knowledge — and it is knowledge that distinguished Adam عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ from the angels. **Shaykh al-Sa'di** explains that *al-Akram* means the One whose attributes are vast and whose goodness and gifts are abundant, and among His greatest gifts is knowledge. Tafsir Ibn Kathir 96:3 · Tafsir al-Sa'di 96:3

HADITH — SUNAN IBN MAJAH, NO. 4036

حَدَّثَنَا أَبُو بَكْرِ بْنُ أَبِي شَيْبَةَ، حَدَّثَنَا يَزِيدُ بْنُ هَارُونَ، حَدَّثَنَا عَبْدُ الْمَلِكِ بْنُ قُدَامَةَ الْجُمَحِيُّ، عَنْ إِسْحَاقَ بْنِ أَبِي الْفُرَاتِ، عَنِ الْمَقْبُرِيِّ، عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ، قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ـ صلى الله عليه وسلم ـ " سَيَأْتِي عَلَى النَّاسِ سَنَوَاتٌ خَدَّاعَاتٌ يُصَدَّقُ فِيهَا الْكَاذِبُ وَيُكَذَّبُ فِيهَا الصَّادِقُ وَيُؤْتَمَنُ فِيهَا الْخَائِنُ وَيُخَوَّنُ فِيهَا الأَمِينُ وَيَنْطِقُ فِيهَا الرُّوَيْبِضَةُ قِيلَ وَمَا الرُّوَيْبِضَةُ قَالَ الرَّجُلُ التَّافِهُ فِي أَمْرِ الْعَامَّةِ " .

TRANSLATION:

From Abu Hurayrah رضى الله عنه, who said: The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "There will come to the people years of deceit, in which the liar will be believed and the truthful will be disbelieved; the treacherous will be trusted and the trustworthy will be considered treacherous; and the Ruwaybidah will speak." It was said: "Who are the Ruwaybidah?" He said: "The contemptible man (without knowledge or qualification) who speaks about the affairs of the public."

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam Ibn Majah: from Abu Bakr ibn Abi Shaybah, from Yazid ibn Harun, from 'Abd al-Malik ibn Qudamah al-Jumahi, from Ishaq ibn Abi al-Furat, from Sa'id al-Maqburi, from Abu Hurayrah رضى الله عنه.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam Ibn Majah in Sunan Ibn Majah, Book of Tribulations, chapter on the hardship of the times, Hadith No. 4036.

GRADE: HASAN according to Darussalam (as shown on sunnah.com); SAHIH according to Shaykh al-Albani (Sahih Ibn Majah). Honest note: this chain contains 'Abd al-Malik ibn Qudamah, about whom there is discussion, but the hadith is strengthened by another chain in Musnad Ahmad.

Source: https://sunnah.com/ibnmajah:4036

COMMENTARY ON THE HADITH OF THE YEARS OF DECEIT

This hadith describes a form of modern jahiliyyah: **confusion of information**. The liar is trusted, the truthful is disbelieved, and *the Ruwaybidah* — people without knowledge or qualification — speak about public affairs. **Ibn al-Athir** in *al-Nihayah fi Gharib al-Hadith* explains that *al-ruwaybidah* is the diminutive (tasghir) of *al-rabidah*, a weak person who "sits back" from noble matters and makes no effort to attain them — yet speaks about great affairs that are not his field. In the age of social media this picture is very close: anyone can "publish", but not everyone who reads filters. The remedy is true Iqra' — reading in the name of the Lord, with the trust of knowledge and with verification (*tabayyun*), as commanded in Surah Al-Hujurat 49:6.

HADITH — SAHIH MUSLIM, NO. 2722

حَدَّثَنَا أَبُو بَكْرِ بْنُ أَبِي شَيْبَةَ، وَإِسْحَاقُ بْنُ إِبْرَاهِيمَ، وَمُحَمَّدُ بْنُ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ نُمَيْرٍ، - وَاللَّفْظُ لاِبْنِ نُمَيْرٍ - قَالَ إِسْحَاقُ أَخْبَرَنَا وَقَالَ الآخَرَانِ، حَدَّثَنَا أَبُو مُعَاوِيَةَ، عَنْ عَاصِمٍ، عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ الْحَارِثِ، وَعَنْ أَبِي عُثْمَانَ النَّهْدِيِّ، عَنْ زَيْدِ بْنِ أَرْقَمَ، قَالَ لاَ أَقُولُ لَكُمْ إِلاَّ كَمَا كَانَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم يَقُولُ كَانَ يَقُولُ « اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنَ الْعَجْزِ وَالْكَسَلِ وَالْجُبْنِ وَالْبُخْلِ وَالْهَرَمِ وَعَذَابِ الْقَبْرِ اللَّهُمَّ آتِ نَفْسِي تَقْوَاهَا وَزَكِّهَا أَنْتَ خَيْرُ مَنْ زَكَّاهَا أَنْتَ وَلِيُّهَا وَمَوْلاَهَا اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْ عِلْمٍ لاَ يَنْفَعُ وَمِنْ قَلْبٍ لاَ يَخْشَعُ وَمِنْ نَفْسٍ لاَ تَشْبَعُ وَمِنْ دَعْوَةٍ لاَ يُسْتَجَابُ لَهَا ».

TRANSLATION:

From Zayd ibn Arqam رضى الله عنه, who said: I will only say to you what the Messenger of Allah ﷺ used to say. He used to supplicate: "O Allah, I seek refuge in You from incapacity, laziness, cowardice, miserliness, senility and the punishment of the grave. O Allah, grant my soul its piety and purify it; You are the best to purify it; You are its Protector and Master. O Allah, I seek refuge in You from knowledge that does not benefit, from a heart that does not humble itself, from a soul that is never satisfied, and from a supplication that is not answered."

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam Muslim: from Abu Bakr ibn Abi Shaybah, Ishaq ibn Ibrahim (Ibn Rahawayh) and Muhammad ibn 'Abdullah ibn Numayr, from Abu Mu'awiyah, from 'Asim al-Ahwal, from 'Abdullah ibn al-Harith and Abu 'Uthman al-Nahdi, from Zayd ibn Arqam رضى الله عنه, from the Messenger of Allah ﷺ.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam Muslim in Sahih Muslim, Book of Remembrance, Supplication, Repentance and Seeking Forgiveness, chapter on seeking refuge from the evil of deeds, Hadith No. 2722.

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih Muslim.

Source: https://sunnah.com/muslim:2722

COMMENTARY ON THE SUPPLICATION FOR REFUGE FROM KNOWLEDGE THAT DOES NOT BENEFIT

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ sought refuge from four things, all related to a "broken connection": knowledge that does not benefit (cut off from action), a heart that does not humble itself (cut off from Allah), a soul that is never satisfied (cut off from contentment), and a supplication that is not answered (cut off from the heavens). **Ibn Rajab al-Hanbali** in his treatise *Fadl 'Ilm al-Salaf 'ala al-Khalaf* explains that beneficial knowledge is knowledge that bears the fruit of knowing Allah, fearing Him, loving Him and humbling oneself before Him; whereas knowledge that stays on the tongue without reaching the heart is a proof against its owner.

HADITH — SAHIH MUSLIM, NO. 2586A

حَدَّثَنَا مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ نُمَيْرٍ، حَدَّثَنَا أَبِي، حَدَّثَنَا زَكَرِيَّاءُ، عَنِ الشَّعْبِيِّ، عَنِ النُّعْمَانِ بْنِ بَشِيرٍ، قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم " مَثَلُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ فِي تَوَادِّهِمْ وَتَرَاحُمِهِمْ وَتَعَاطُفِهِمْ مَثَلُ الْجَسَدِ إِذَا اشْتَكَى مِنْهُ عُضْوٌ تَدَاعَى لَهُ سَائِرُ الْجَسَدِ بِالسَّهَرِ وَالْحُمَّى " .

TRANSLATION:

From al-Nu'man ibn Bashir رضى الله عنهما, who said: The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "The likeness of the believers in their mutual love, mercy and compassion is that of one body. When one limb of it complains, the whole body responds to it with sleeplessness and fever."

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CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam Muslim: from Muhammad ibn 'Abdullah ibn Numayr, from his father 'Abdullah ibn Numayr, from Zakariyya ibn Abi Za'idah, from 'Amir al-Sha'bi, from al-Nu'man ibn Bashir رضى الله عنهما.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam Muslim in Sahih Muslim, Book of Virtue, Good Manners and Joining the Ties of Kinship, chapter on the mercy, compassion and mutual support of the believers, Hadith No. 2586a.

GRADE: SAHIH — muttafaq 'alayh (also Sahih al-Bukhari, No. 6011).

Source: https://sunnah.com/muslim:2586a

Imam al-Nawawi in his commentary on *Sahih Muslim* explains that these hadiths show how great the rights of Muslims over one another are, and encourage mutual love, gentleness and helping one another in what is not sinful. Knowledge born of "your Most Generous Lord" should make its reader more sensitive to the pain of the other limbs of the ummah's "body".

HADITH — SUNAN IBN MAJAH, NO. 4032

حَدَّثَنَا عَلِيُّ بْنُ مَيْمُونٍ الرَّقِّيُّ، حَدَّثَنَا عَبْدُ الْوَاحِدِ بْنُ صَالِحٍ، حَدَّثَنَا إِسْحَاقُ بْنُ يُوسُفَ، عَنِ الأَعْمَشِ، عَنْ يَحْيَى بْنِ وَثَّابٍ، عَنِ ابْنِ عُمَرَ، قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ـ صلى الله عليه وسلم ـ " الْمُؤْمِنُ الَّذِي يُخَالِطُ النَّاسَ وَيَصْبِرُ عَلَى أَذَاهُمْ أَعْظَمُ أَجْرًا مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِ الَّذِي لاَ يُخَالِطُ النَّاسَ وَلاَ يَصْبِرُ عَلَى أَذَاهُمْ " .

TRANSLATION:

From Ibn 'Umar رضى الله عنهما, who said: The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "The believer who mixes with people and bears their harm patiently has a greater reward than the believer who does not mix with people and does not bear their harm patiently."

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam Ibn Majah: from 'Ali ibn Maymun al-Raqqi, from 'Abd al-Wahid ibn Salih, from Ishaq ibn Yusuf al-Azraq, from al-A'mash, from Yahya ibn Waththab, from 'Abdullah ibn 'Umar رضى الله عنهما.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam Ibn Majah in Sunan Ibn Majah, Book of Tribulations, chapter on patience in the face of trials, Hadith No. 4032.

GRADE: SAHIH — according to Darussalam (as shown on sunnah.com) and Shaykh al-Albani.

Source: https://sunnah.com/ibnmajah:4032

Imam al-Nawawi places this meaning in *Riyad al-Salihin* under the chapter on the virtue of mixing with people: attending the congregation, gatherings of knowledge and remembrance, visiting the sick and the like. He stresses that mixing in this way is better for whoever is able to benefit others and be patient, except in times of tribulation that endanger one's religion. The reader who isolates himself with his knowledge loses half of the reward of Iqra'.

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SCIENTIFIC FINDING: SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS AND SURVIVAL

A large meta-analysis by Holt-Lunstad, Smith and Layton (2010), combining 148 studies involving 308,849 participants, found that individuals with stronger social relationships had a 50% greater likelihood of survival over the study period. This effect is comparable to well-known risk factors for death such as smoking, and was strongest when measured through overall social integration. This finding is in harmony with the Prophet's ﷺ picture of the ummah as "one body" and the virtue of the believer who mixes with people and is patient.

STUDY REFERENCE:

Holt-Lunstad J, Smith TB & Layton JB (2010). Social relationships and mortality risk: a meta-analytic review. PLoS Medicine 7(7):e1000316. https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pmed.1000316

AL-QALAM AND THE ROLE OF THE MEDIUM OF READING

SURAH AL-'ALAQ 96:4

ٱلَّذِى عَلَّمَ بِٱلْقَلَمِ ﴿٤﴾

Who taught by the pen?

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/96:4

EXPLANATION OF THE VERSE

In the first five verses of revelation, the only "tool" mentioned is **al-Qalam** (the pen). This is remarkable when we remember that it was revealed to an unlettered Prophet in a society that relied more on oral memory. Allah introduces Himself as the Lord "who taught by the pen" — indicating that knowledge would be preserved, spread and inherited through writing. The Qur'an itself was later compiled in the mushaf, and the Sunnah was recorded in the books of hadith.

COMMENTARY OF RESPECTED SCHOLARS

Imam al-Qurtubi quotes **Qatadah** as saying that the pen is a very great blessing from Allah; were it not for the pen, religion would not stand and life would not be good. **Imam Ibn Kathir** explains that knowledge is sometimes in the mind, sometimes on the tongue, and sometimes in writing — and writing contains the other two, but not the other way round. Tafsir Ibn Kathir 96:4 · Tafsir al-Qurtubi 96:4

HADITH — SUNAN ABI DAWUD, NO. 4700

حَدَّثَنَا جَعْفَرُ بْنُ مُسَافِرٍ الْهُذَلِيُّ، حَدَّثَنَا يَحْيَى بْنُ حَسَّانَ، حَدَّثَنَا الْوَلِيدُ بْنُ رَبَاحٍ، عَنْ إِبْرَاهِيمَ بْنِ أَبِي عَبْلَةَ، عَنْ أَبِي حَفْصَةَ، قَالَ قَالَ عُبَادَةُ بْنُ الصَّامِتِ لاِبْنِهِ يَا بُنَىَّ إِنَّكَ لَنْ تَجِدَ طَعْمَ حَقِيقَةِ الإِيمَانِ حَتَّى تَعْلَمَ أَنَّ مَا أَصَابَكَ لَمْ يَكُنْ لِيُخْطِئَكَ وَمَا أَخْطَأَكَ لَمْ يَكُنْ لِيُصِيبَكَ سَمِعْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم يَقُولُ " إِنَّ أَوَّلَ مَا خَلَقَ اللَّهُ الْقَلَمَ فَقَالَ لَهُ اكْتُبْ . قَالَ رَبِّ وَمَاذَا أَكْتُبُ قَالَ اكْتُبْ مَقَادِيرَ كُلِّ شَىْءٍ حَتَّى تَقُومَ السَّاعَةُ " . يَا بُنَىَّ إِنِّي سَمِعْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم يَقُولُ " مَنْ مَاتَ عَلَى غَيْرِ هَذَا فَلَيْسَ مِنِّي " .

TRANSLATION:

Abu Hafsah said: 'Ubadah ibn al-Samit رضى الله عنه said to his son: "O my son, you will not taste the sweetness of the reality of faith until you know that what has befallen you was not going to miss you, and what has missed

you was not going to befall you. I heard the Messenger of Allah ﷺ say: 'The first thing Allah created was the Pen, and He said to it: Write! It said: My Lord, what shall I write? He said: Write the decrees of all things until the Hour is established.' O my son, I heard the Messenger of Allah ﷺ say: 'Whoever dies upon (a belief) other than this is not of me.'"

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam Abu Dawud: from Ja'far ibn Musafir al-Hudhali, from Yahya ibn Hassan, from al-Walid ibn Rabah, from Ibrahim ibn Abi 'Ablah, from Abu Hafsah, from 'Ubadah ibn al-Samit رضى الله عنه.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam Abu Dawud in Sunan Abi Dawud, Book of the Sunnah, chapter on al-Qadar, Hadith No. 4700.

GRADE: SAHIH — graded by Shaykh al-Albani (as shown on sunnah.com).

Source: https://sunnah.com/abudawud:4700

This hadith places al-Qalam in a very high position: it is the first creation commanded to **write** the decrees of all things. **Imam Ibn Kathir** mentions this hadith when explaining Surah Al-Qalam. From the Preserved Tablet to the mushaf in our hands, writing is the medium Allah chose to preserve His knowledge.

HADITH — SUNAN ABI DAWUD, NO. 3646

حَدَّثَنَا مُسَدَّدٌ، وَأَبُو بَكْرِ بْنُ أَبِي شَيْبَةَ قَالاَ حَدَّثَنَا يَحْيَى، عَنْ عُبَيْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ الأَخْنَسِ، عَنِ الْوَلِيدِ بْنِ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ أَبِي مُغِيثٍ، عَنْ يُوسُفَ بْنِ مَاهَكَ، عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ عَمْرٍو، قَالَ كُنْتُ أَكْتُبُ كُلَّ شَىْءٍ أَسْمَعُهُ مِنْ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم أُرِيدُ حِفْظَهُ فَنَهَتْنِي قُرَيْشٌ وَقَالُوا أَتَكْتُبُ كُلَّ شَىْءٍ تَسْمَعُهُ وَرَسُولُ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم بَشَرٌ يَتَكَلَّمُ فِي الْغَضَبِ وَالرِّضَا فَأَمْسَكْتُ عَنِ الْكِتَابِ فَذَكَرْتُ ذَلِكَ لِرَسُولِ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم فَأَوْمَأَ بِأُصْبُعِهِ إِلَى فِيهِ فَقَالَ " اكْتُبْ فَوَالَّذِي نَفْسِي بِيَدِهِ مَا يَخْرُجُ مِنْهُ إِلاَّ حَقٌّ " .

TRANSLATION:

From 'Abdullah ibn 'Amr رضى الله عنهما, who said: "I used to write down everything I heard from the Messenger of Allah ﷺ because I wanted to memorise it. Then Quraysh forbade me and said: 'Do you write down everything you hear, when the Messenger of Allah ﷺ is a human being who speaks in anger and in contentment?' So I stopped writing, and mentioned this to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. He pointed with his finger to his mouth and said: 'Write! By the One in whose hand is my soul, nothing comes out of it except the truth.'"

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam Abu Dawud: from Musaddad and Abu Bakr ibn Abi Shaybah, from Yahya ibn Sa'id al-Qattan, from 'Ubaydullah ibn al-Akhnas, from al-Walid ibn 'Abdullah ibn Abi Mughith, from Yusuf ibn Mahak, from 'Abdullah ibn 'Amr رضى الله عنهما.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam Abu Dawud in Sunan Abi Dawud, Book of Knowledge, chapter on writing down knowledge, Hadith No. 3646.

GRADE: SAHIH — graded by Shaykh al-Albani (as shown on sunnah.com).

Source: https://sunnah.com/abudawud:3646

Imam al-Nawawi in his commentary on *Sahih Muslim* explains that the prohibition of writing hadith in early Islam (Sahih Muslim No. 3004) was understood by scholars as being due to the fear that it would be mixed with the Qur'an; then permission was given when that fear was removed — as in this hadith — and finally the consensus of the Muslims established that writing knowledge is permissible. The right medium, used with trustworthiness, becomes a guardian of the truth.

SURAH AL-QALAM 68:1

نٓ وَٱلۡقَلَمِ وَمَا يَسۡطُرُونَ ١

Nun. By the pen and what they inscribe.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/68:1

EXPLANATION OF THE VERSE AND SCHOLARLY COMMENTARY

Allah **swears an oath** by the pen and what is written. In Arabic usage, Allah swears only by something great. **Imam Ibn Kathir** explains that the apparent meaning of this verse is the kind of pen used for writing, as in His words "who taught by the pen"; this oath reminds creation of the blessing of being taught writing, through which knowledge is attained. Ibn Kathir also mentions the view that what is meant is the pen that Allah commanded to write the decrees. Tafsir Ibn Kathir 68:1 **Shaykh al-Sa'di** states that the oath by the pen and writing contains signs of Allah's power, because through it the various kinds of knowledge are preserved. Tafsir al-Sa'di 68:1

HADITH — MUSNAD AHMAD, NO. 3870

حَدَّثَنَا أَبُو أَحْمَدَ الزُّبَيْرِيُّ حَدَّثَنَا بَشِيرُ بْنُ سَلْمَانَ عَنْ سَيَّارٍ عَنْ طَارِقِ بْنِ شِهَابٍ قَالَ كُنَّا عِنْدَ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ جُلُوسًا فَجَاءَ رَجُلٌ فَقَالَ قَدْ أُقِيمَتْ الصَّلَاةُ فَقَامَ وَقُمْنَا مَعَهُ فَلَمَّا دَخَلْنَا الْمَسْجِدَ رَأَيْنَا النَّاسَ رُكُوعًا فِي مُقَدَّمِ الْمَسْجِدِ فَكَبَّرَ وَرَكَعَ وَرَكَعْنَا ثُمَّ مَشَيْنَا وَصَنَعْنَا مِثْلَ

الَّذِي صَنَعَ فَمَرَّ رَجُلٌ يُسْرِعُ فَقَالَ عَلَيْكَ السَّلَامُ يَا أَبَا عَبْدِ الرَّحْمَنِ فَقَالَ صَدَقَ اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ فَلَمَّا صَلَّيْنَا وَرَجَعْنَا دَخَلَ إِلَى أَهْلِهِ جَلَسْنَا فَقَالَ بَعْضُنَا لِبَعْضٍ أَمَا سَمِعْتُمْ رَدَّهُ عَلَى الرَّجُلِ صَدَقَ اللَّهُ وَبَلَّغَتْ رُسُلُهُ أَيُّكُمْ يَسْأَلُهُ فَقَالَ طَارِقٌ أَنَا أَسْأَلُهُ فَسَأَلَهُ حِينَ خَرَجَ فَذَكَرَ عَنْ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ أَنَّ بَيْنَ يَدَيْ السَّاعَةِ تَسْلِيمَ الْخَاصَّةِ وَفُشُوَّ التِّجَارَةِ حَتَّى تُعِينَ الْمَرْأَةُ زَوْجَهَا عَلَى التِّجَارَةِ وَقَطْعَ الْأَرْحَامِ وَشَهَادَةَ الزُّورِ وَكِتْمَانَ شَهَادَةِ الْحَقِّ وَظُهُورَ الْقَلَمِ

TRANSLATION:

Tariq ibn Shihab said: We were sitting with 'Abdullah (ibn Mas'ud) رضى الله عنه when a man came and said: "The iqamah for prayer has been called." So he stood up and we stood up with him. When we entered the mosque, we saw the people bowing at the front of the mosque. He said the takbir and bowed, and we bowed too, then we walked (to the row) and did as he did. Then a man passed by hurriedly and said: "'Alayka al-salam (peace be upon you), O Abu 'Abd al-Rahman." He said: "Allah and His Messenger have spoken the truth." When we had prayed and returned, he went in to his family and we sat down. Some of us said to others: "Did you not hear his reply to the man: 'Allah has spoken the truth and His messengers have conveyed'? Which of you will ask him?" Tariq said: "I will ask him." So he asked him when he came out. He mentioned from the Prophet ﷺ: "Before the Hour there will be: greeting only particular people (those one knows), the spread of trade until a wife helps her husband in trade, the severing of ties of kinship, false testimony, the concealing of true testimony, and the spread of the qalam (writing)."

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam Ahmad: from Abu Ahmad al-Zubayri, from Bashir ibn Salman, from Sayyar, from Tariq ibn Shihab, from 'Abdullah ibn Mas'ud رضى الله عنه, from the Prophet ﷺ.

Note: The Arabic text is copied from Musnad Ahmad (no. 3870 according to the numbering of the al-Risalah edition used by Shaykh Shu'ayb al-Arna'ut; no. 3676 in the old numbering). The Musnad Ahmad page on sunnah.com could not be opened during preparation, so the main source below is dorar.net. The narrator names are linked to the same narrators' pages on sunnah.com (verified through the chains of Jami' al-Tirmidhi No. 2326 and Sahih al-Bukhari No. 3984).

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal in al-Musnad, Musnad 'Abdullah ibn Mas'ud, Hadith No. 3870; also narrated by al-Bukhari in al-Adab al-Mufrad (No. 1049) and al-Hakim (No. 7043).

GRADE: HASAN according to Shaykh Shu'ayb al-Arna'ut (Takhrij al-Musnad, No. 3870); SAHIH according to Shaykh Ahmad Shakir (Takhrij al-Musnad 5/333); and Shaykh al-Albani said: "Its chain is sahih according to the conditions of Muslim" (al-Silsilah al-Sahihah, No. 647). Honest note: the content of Sahih al-Jami' No. 3011 could not be verified during the preparation of this eBook.

Check: dorar.net — Takhrij al-Musnad (Shu'ayb al-Arna'ut) No. 3870

Check: dorar.net — al-Silsilah al-Sahihah (al-Albani) No. 647

Check: dorar.net — Sahih al-Adab al-Mufrad (al-Albani) No. 801

Source: https://dorar.net/h/o6m7ZjUH

COMMENTARY ON THE HADITH OF "ZUHUR AL-QALAM"

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This hadith of Ibn Mas'ud رضى الله عنه lists *zuhur al-qalam* — the spread of writing — as one of the signs before the Hour, together with the severing of ties of kinship and false testimony. The scholars understand that what is censured is not the pen itself, for Allah has honoured it in Surah Al-'Alaq and sworn by it in Surah Al-Qalam. What is indicated is a state in which **writing becomes abundant but is not accompanied by knowledge and trustworthiness** — reading material overflows, yet the truth is increasingly concealed and false testimony increasingly widespread. Today, with millions of writings published on the internet every day, the meaning of this hadith is keenly felt.

Here both verses meet the hadith: **the medium of reading is neutral**; its value is determined by the "name" that accompanies it. A pen moved *in the name of the Lord* records revelation and knowledge; a pen moved by desire spreads lies. So every reader and writer — whether with a pen, a keyboard or a touch screen — must ask: in whose name do I write and read?

SCIENTIFIC FINDING: HANDWRITING ACTIVATES WIDER BRAIN NETWORKS

Van der Weel and Van der Meer (2024) recorded the brain activity of 36 university students using high-density EEG (256 channels) while they wrote words by hand with a digital pen and while they typed on a keyboard. Handwriting produced far more widespread patterns of brain connectivity in the parietal and central regions, in the theta/alpha frequencies that are important for memory formation and encoding new information. The researchers suggest that children be exposed to handwriting activities from an early age. This finding gives a new dimension to Allah's words "who taught by the pen": the medium used for learning affects how knowledge is absorbed.

STUDY REFERENCE:

Van der Weel FRR & Van der Meer ALH (2024). Handwriting but not typewriting leads to widespread brain connectivity: a high-density EEG study with implications for the classroom. Frontiers in Psychology 14:1219945. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2023.1219945

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KNOWLEDGE THAT BRINGS US HOME TO ALLAH ﷻ

SURAH AL-'ALAQ 96:5

عَلَّمَ ٱلْإِنسَٰنَ مَا لَمْ يَعْلَمْ ۝٥

Taught man that which he knew not.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/96:5

EXPLANATION OF THE VERSE

The fifth verse closes the first chain of revelation with an acknowledgement: **all human knowledge is taught by Allah**. Whatever people know — from the names taught to Adam عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ to the latest scientific discoveries — was originally "*ma lam ya'lam*", something not known before, which Allah then taught. If knowledge comes from Allah, then true knowledge is knowledge that **leads back** to Him. Knowledge that takes people away from Allah is knowledge that has lost its way home.

COMMENTARY OF RESPECTED SCHOLARS

Imam Ibn Kathir states that Allah honoured man by teaching him what he did not know, and that was the honour of Adam عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ over the angels. **Shaykh al-Sa'di** explains that Allah brought man out of his mother's womb knowing nothing, then gave him hearing, sight and a heart, and made the paths of knowledge easy for him; so his duty is to be grateful for this blessing. Tafsir Ibn Kathir 96:5 · Tafsir al-Sa'di 96:5

HADITH — SAHIH MUSLIM, NO. 1905A

حَدَّثَنَا يَحْيَى بْنُ حَبِيبٍ الْحَارِثِيُّ، حَدَّثَنَا خَالِدُ بْنُ الْحَارِثِ، حَدَّثَنَا ابْنُ جُرَيْجٍ، حَدَّثَنِي يُونُسُ بْنُ يُوسُفَ، عَنْ سُلَيْمَانَ بْنِ يَسَارٍ، قَالَ تَفَرَّقَ النَّاسُ عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ، فَقَالَ لَهُ نَاتِلٌ أَهْلِ الشَّامِ أَيُّهَا الشَّيْخُ حَدِّثْنَا حَدِيثًا سَمِعْتَهُ مِنْ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم قَالَ نَعَمْ سَمِعْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم يَقُولُ " إِنَّ أَوَّلَ النَّاسِ يُقْضَى يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ عَلَيْهِ رَجُلٌ اسْتُشْهِدَ فَأُتِيَ بِهِ فَعَرَّفَهُ نِعَمَهُ فَعَرَفَهَا قَالَ فَمَا عَمِلْتَ فِيهَا قَالَ قَاتَلْتُ فِيكَ حَتَّى اسْتُشْهِدْتُ . قَالَ كَذَبْتَ وَلَكِنَّكَ قَاتَلْتَ لأَنْ يُقَالَ جَرِيءٌ . فَقَدْ قِيلَ . ثُمَّ أُمِرَ بِهِ فَسُحِبَ عَلَى وَجْهِهِ حَتَّى أُلْقِيَ فِي النَّارِ وَرَجُلٌ تَعَلَّمَ الْعِلْمَ وَعَلَّمَهُ وَقَرَأَ الْقُرْآنَ فَأُتِيَ بِهِ فَعَرَّفَهُ نِعَمَهُ فَعَرَفَهَا قَالَ فَمَا عَمِلْتَ فِيهَا قَالَ تَعَلَّمْتُ الْعِلْمَ وَعَلَّمْتُهُ وَقَرَأْتُ فِيكَ الْقُرْآنَ . قَالَ كَذَبْتَ وَلَكِنَّكَ

تَعَلَّمْتَ الْعِلْمَ لِيُقَالَ عَالِمٌ . وَقَرَأْتَ الْقُرْآنَ لِيُقَالَ هُوَ قَارِئٌ . فَقَدْ قِيلَ ثُمَّ أُمِرَ بِهِ فَسُحِبَ عَلَى وَجْهِهِ حَتَّى أُلْقِيَ فِي النَّارِ . وَرَجُلٌ وَسَّعَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَأَعْطَاهُ مِنْ أَصْنَافِ الْمَالِ كُلِّهِ فَأُتِيَ بِهِ فَعَرَّفَهُ نِعَمَهُ فَعَرَفَهَا قَالَ فَمَا عَمِلْتَ فِيهَا قَالَ مَا تَرَكْتُ مِنْ سَبِيلٍ تُحِبُّ أَنْ يُنْفَقَ فِيهَا إِلاَّ أَنْفَقْتُ فِيهَا لَكَ قَالَ كَذَبْتَ وَلَكِنَّكَ فَعَلْتَ لِيُقَالَ هُوَ جَوَادٌ . فَقَدْ قِيلَ ثُمَّ أُمِرَ بِهِ فَسُحِبَ عَلَى وَجْهِهِ ثُمَّ أُلْقِيَ فِي النَّارِ " .

TRANSLATION:

Sulayman ibn Yasar said: The people dispersed from around Abu Hurayrah رضى الله عنه, and Natil, (a leader) of the people of Sham, said to him: "O Shaykh, tell us a hadith you heard from the Messenger of Allah ﷺ."

He said: "Yes. I heard the Messenger of Allah ﷺ say: 'The first person to be judged on the Day of Resurrection will be a man who was martyred. He will be brought, and Allah will make him acknowledge His blessings, and he will acknowledge them. Allah will say: What did you do with them? He will say: I fought for You until I was martyred. Allah will say: You have lied. Rather, you fought so that it would be said: He is brave. And it has been said. Then it will be commanded that he be dragged on his face until he is thrown into the Fire. And a man who learned knowledge, taught it and recited the Qur'an. He will be brought, and Allah will make him acknowledge His blessings, and he will acknowledge them. Allah will say: What did you do with them? He will say: I learned knowledge, taught it and recited the Qur'an for Your sake. Allah will say: You have lied. Rather, you learned knowledge so that it would be said: He is a scholar; and you recited the Qur'an so that it would be said: He is a reciter. And it has been said. Then it will be commanded that he be dragged on his face until he is thrown into the Fire. And a man whom Allah gave abundant provision and all kinds of wealth. He will be brought, and Allah will make him acknowledge His blessings, and he will acknowledge them. Allah will say: What did you do with them? He will say: I did not leave any path in which You love wealth to be spent except that I spent in it for Your sake. Allah will say: You have lied. Rather, you did it so that it would be said: He is generous. And it has been said. Then it will be commanded that he be dragged on his face, then thrown into the Fire.'"

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam Muslim: from Yahya ibn Habib al-Harithi, from Khalid ibn al-Harith, from Ibn Jurayj, from Yunus ibn Yusuf, from Sulayman ibn Yasar, from Abu Hurayrah رضى الله عنه.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam Muslim in Sahih Muslim, Book of Government, chapter: whoever fights for show and reputation deserves the Fire, Hadith No. 1905a.

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih Muslim.

Source: https://sunnah.com/muslim:1905a

This hadith is the sternest warning about knowledge that **does not lead home to Allah**. The scholar and the reciter had "read" — indeed taught and memorised the Qur'an — but their reading was not "in the name of their Lord"; it was in their own name, to be called a scholar. **Imam al-Nawawi** in his commentary on *Sahih Muslim* states that this hadith shows how severe the prohibition of showing off (riya') is and how great its punishment, and encourages sincerity in deeds, as Allah says in Surah Al-Bayyinah 98:5. In al-

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Tirmidhi's narration of the same hadith, it is mentioned that Mu'awiyah رضى الله عنه wept intensely when this hadith was conveyed to him.

SURAH ALI 'IMRAN 3:79

مَا كَانَ لِبَشَرٍ أَن يُؤْتِيَهُ ٱللَّهُ ٱلْكِتَٰبَ وَٱلْحُكْمَ وَٱلنُّبُوَّةَ ثُمَّ يَقُولَ لِلنَّاسِ كُونُوا۟ عِبَادًا لِّى مِن دُونِ ٱللَّهِ وَلَٰكِن كُونُوا۟ رَبَّٰنِيِّۦنَ بِمَا كُنتُمْ تُعَلِّمُونَ ٱلْكِتَٰبَ وَبِمَا كُنتُمْ تَدْرُسُونَ ﴿٧٩﴾

It is not for a human [prophet] that Allah should give him the Scripture and authority and prophethood and then he would say to the people, "Be servants to me rather than Allah," but [instead, he would say], "Be pious scholars of the Lord because of what you have taught of the Scripture and because of what you have studied."

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/3:79

EXPLANATION OF THE VERSE AND SCHOLARLY COMMENTARY

This verse sets the final goal of one who learns and teaches the Book: to become ***rabbaniyyin*** — people attributed to *al-Rabb*, the Lord. Notice the reason given: "*bima kuntum tu'allimuna al-kitab wa bima kuntum tadrusun*" — because you teach and because you study. The very process of studying and teaching should produce people who are close to their Lord.

Athar (not a Hadith): Imam al-Bukhari placed in his *Sahih*, Book of Knowledge, Chapter (10) "Knowledge Before Speech and Action", the words of Ibn 'Abbas رضى الله عنهما about this verse: "*Kunu rabbaniyyin*: (that is) wise and learned in fiqh." And it is said: "*Al-Rabbani* is the one who nurtures people with the smaller matters of knowledge before the greater ones." Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of Knowledge

وَقَالَ ابْنُ عَبَّاسٍ: ﴿كُونُوا رَبَّانِيِّينَ﴾ حُكَمَاءَ فُقَهَاءَ. وَيُقَالُ الرَّبَّانِيُّ الَّذِي يُرَبِّي النَّاسَ بِصِغَارِ الْعِلْمِ قَبْلَ كِبَارِهِ

Imam Ibn Kathir quotes a similar explanation from many of the salaf: *rabbaniyyin* are scholars who are wise, forbearing and learned in fiqh. The explanation "nurturing with smaller knowledge before the greater" shows that a rabbani person is not only close to Allah, but also wise in bringing others home to Him step by step. Tafsir Ibn Kathir 3:79

HADITH — SUNAN ABI DAWUD, NO. 3664

حَدَّثَنَا أَبُو بَكْرِ بْنُ أَبِي شَيْبَةَ، حَدَّثَنَا سُرَيْجُ بْنُ النَّعْمَانِ، حَدَّثَنَا فُلَيْحٌ، عَنْ أَبِي طُوَالَةَ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ عَبْدِ الرَّحْمَنِ بْنِ مَعْمَرٍ الأَنْصَارِيِّ، عَنْ سَعِيدِ بْنِ يَسَارٍ، عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ، قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم " مَنْ تَعَلَّمَ عِلْمًا مِمَّا يُبْتَغَى بِهِ وَجْهُ اللَّهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ لاَ يَتَعَلَّمُهُ إِلاَّ لِيُصِيبَ بِهِ عَرَضًا مِنَ الدُّنْيَا لَمْ يَجِدْ عَرْفَ الْجَنَّةِ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ " . يَعْنِي رِيحَهَا .

TRANSLATION:

From Abu Hurayrah رضى الله عنه, who said: The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "Whoever learns knowledge by which the Face of Allah, the Mighty and Majestic, should be sought, but learns it only to obtain some worldly gain, will not find the 'arf of Paradise on the Day of Resurrection" — meaning its fragrance.

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam Abu Dawud: from Abu Bakr ibn Abi Shaybah, from Surayj ibn al-Nu'man, from Fulayh ibn Sulayman, from Abu Tuwalah 'Abdullah ibn 'Abd al-Rahman al-Ansari, from Sa'id ibn Yasar, from Abu Hurayrah رضى الله عنه.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam Abu Dawud in Sunan Abi Dawud, Book of Knowledge, chapter on seeking knowledge for other than Allah, Hadith No. 3664.

GRADE: SAHIH — graded by Shaykh al-Albani (as shown on sunnah.com).

Source: https://sunnah.com/abudawud:3664

This hadith is the dividing line between knowledge that leads home and knowledge that loses the way. The commentators of hadith explain that this threat is specific to knowledge that should be sought for Allah's pleasure — such as religious knowledge — but is made merely a tool for obtaining worldly gain. Notice how subtle it is: he will not even smell the *fragrance* of Paradise, let alone enter it. This agrees with the warning in Sahih Muslim No. 1905 above.

SURAH AN-NUR 24:45

وَٱللَّهُ خَلَقَ كُلَّ دَآبَّةٍ مِّن مَّآءٍ ۖ فَمِنْهُم مَّن يَمْشِى عَلَىٰ بَطْنِهِۦ وَمِنْهُم مَّن يَمْشِى عَلَىٰ رِجْلَيْنِ وَمِنْهُم مَّن يَمْشِى عَلَىٰٓ أَرْبَعٍ ۚ يَخْلُقُ ٱللَّهُ مَا يَشَآءُ ۚ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَىْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ﴿٤٥﴾

Allah has created every [living] creature from water. And of them are those that move on their bellies, and of them are those that walk on two legs, and of them are those that walk on four. Allah creates what He wills. Indeed, Allah is over all things competent.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/24:45

EXPLANATION OF THE VERSE AND SCHOLARLY COMMENTARY

This verse is an example of "reading material" from the book of the universe. Allah created *every dabbah* (moving creature) from **water**, then diversified them: some walk on their bellies, some on two legs and some on four. **Imam Ibn Kathir** explains that this verse mentions the perfection of Allah's power, who created various kinds of creatures with different shapes, colours, movements and stillness from one kind of water. **Imam al-Qurtubi** mentions the view of the exegetes that "water" here refers to *nutfah* (semen), and also the view that water is the origin of all creatures, in line with His words in Surah Al-Anbiya' 21:30: "*And We made from water every living thing*." Tafsir Ibn Kathir 24:45 · Tafsir al-Qurtubi 24:45

The closing of this verse, "*Indeed, Allah is over all things competent*", is the destination of reading. A biology student who studies the diversity of creatures should arrive at the same conclusion: this diversity is not chance, but a sign of power. This is knowledge that leads home.

HADITH — SAHIH MUSLIM, NO. 2996

حَدَّثَنَا مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ رَافِعٍ، وَعَبْدُ بْنُ حُمَيْدٍ، قَالَ عَبْدٌ أَخْبَرَنَا وَقَالَ ابْنُ رَافِعٍ، حَدَّثَنَا عَبْدُ الرَّزَّاقِ، أَخْبَرَنَا مَعْمَرٌ، عَنِ الزُّهْرِيِّ، عَنْ عُرْوَةَ، عَنْ عَائِشَةَ، قَالَتْ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم " خُلِقَتِ الْمَلاَئِكَةُ مِنْ نُورٍ وَخُلِقَ الْجَانُّ مِنْ مَارِجٍ مِنْ نَارٍ وَخُلِقَ آدَمُ مِمَّا وُصِفَ لَكُمْ " .

TRANSLATION:

From 'A'ishah رضى الله عنها, who said: The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "The angels were created from light, the jinn were created from a smokeless flame of fire, and Adam was created from what has been described to you."

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam Muslim: from Muhammad ibn Rafi' and 'Abd ibn Humayd, from 'Abd al-Razzaq, from Ma'mar, from al-Zuhri, from 'Urwah, from 'A'ishah رضى الله عنها.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam Muslim in Sahih Muslim, Book of Asceticism and Softening of Hearts, chapter on various hadiths, Hadith No. 2996.

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih Muslim.

Source: https://sunnah.com/muslim:2996

The commentators of hadith explain that "*what has been described to you*" means clay, as described in the Qur'an in several places. This hadith completes the picture of Surah An-Nur 24:45 about the variety

of the original materials of Allah's creation — light, fire, clay and water — all of which show that He creates what He wills.

SCIENTIFIC FINDING: WATER AS THE BASIS OF CELLULAR LIFE

In a review in the journal Nature Reviews Molecular Cell Biology, Chaplin (2006) stresses that water is not merely a passive "solvent" in the cell. Through its unique hydrogen-bonding properties, water shapes and controls biological molecules, helps proteins fold, transports protons and electrons, and transmits information at different scales. No form of life known to science can function without liquid water. This fact is in harmony with Allah's words: "Allah has created every moving creature from water" (24:45) and "We made from water every living thing" (21:30).

STUDY REFERENCE:

Chaplin M (2006). Do we underestimate the importance of water in cell biology? Nature Reviews Molecular Cell Biology 7(11):861–866. https://doi.org/10.1038/nrm2021

CONCLUSION

A BRIEF COMPARISON

JAHILIYYAH	IQRA'
Reading without the name of the Lord — value-free knowledge	Reading in the name of the Lord (96:1)
Forgetting Allah, then forgetting oneself (59:19)	Knowing the weak self, then knowing Allah (96:2; 51:21)
The liar is trusted, the Ruwaybidah speak (Ibn Majah 4036)	Knowledge that cares — the ummah as one body (Muslim 2586)
Knowledge that does not benefit, a heart that does not humble itself (Muslim 2722)	Knowledge that connects the servant with the Lord and with people (96:3)
Writing overflowing without trustworthiness (Ahmad 3870)	A pen moved with trustworthiness (96:4; 68:1)
Knowledge sought to be called a scholar (Muslim 1905)	Knowledge that makes a person rabbani (3:79)
Seeing the universe without seeing the Creator	Reading the diversity of creation as a sign of His power (24:45)

Jahiliyyah has never truly disappeared; it only changes its face. In the past it wore the face of stone idols and tribal arrogance; today it may wear the face of false information, knowledge without God, and cleverness that severs ties of kinship. Yet the remedy remains the same, revealed in the Cave of Hira' more than fourteen centuries ago: **Iqra' bismi Rabbik** — read in the name of your Lord.

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May Allah make us readers who read in His name, who know ourselves and then know Him, who connect rather than isolate, who use the pen with trustworthiness, and who make every knowledge a way home to Him. *Rabbi zidni 'ilma* — My Lord, increase me in knowledge.

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SURAH AL-BAQARAH 2:261

مَّثَلُ ٱلَّذِينَ يُنفِقُونَ أَمۡوَٰلَهُمۡ فِي سَبِيلِ ٱللَّهِ كَمَثَلِ حَبَّةٍ أَنۢبَتَتۡ سَبۡعَ سَنَابِلَ فِي كُلِّ سُنۢبُلَةٖ مِّاْئَةُ حَبَّةٖۗ وَٱللَّهُ يُضَٰعِفُ لِمَن يَشَآءُۚ وَٱللَّهُ وَٰسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ ٢٦١

The example of those who spend their wealth in the way of Allah is like a seed [of grain] which grows seven spikes; in each spike is a hundred grains. And Allah multiplies [His reward] for whom He wills. And Allah is all-Encompassing and Knowing.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/2:261

SURAH SABA' 34:39

قُلۡ إِنَّ رَبِّي يَبۡسُطُ ٱلرِّزۡقَ لِمَن يَشَآءُ مِنۡ عِبَادِهِۦ وَيَقۡدِرُ لَهُۥۚ وَمَآ أَنفَقۡتُم مِّن شَيۡءٖ فَهُوَ يُخۡلِفُهُۥۖ وَهُوَ خَيۡرُ ٱلرَّٰزِقِينَ ٣٩

Say, "Indeed, my Lord extends provision for whom He wills of His servants and restricts [it] for him. But whatever thing you spend [in His cause] - He will compensate it; and He is the best of providers."

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/34:39

HADITH — SAHIH MUSLIM, NO. 2588

حَدَّثَنَا يَحْيَى بْنُ أَيُّوبَ، وَقُتَيْبَةُ، وَابْنُ، حُجْرٍ قَالُوا حَدَّثَنَا إِسْمَاعِيلُ، - وَهُوَ ابْنُ جَعْفَرٍ - عَنِ الْعَلاَءِ، عَنْ أَبِيهِ، عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ، عَنْ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم قَالَ « مَا نَقَصَتْ صَدَقَةٌ مِنْ مَالٍ وَمَا زَادَ اللَّهُ عَبْدًا بِعَفْوٍ إِلاَّ عِزًّا وَمَا تَوَاضَعَ أَحَدٌ لِلَّهِ إِلاَّ رَفَعَهُ اللَّهُ ».

TRANSLATION:

From Abu Hurayrah رضى الله عنه, from the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, who said: "Charity does not decrease wealth. Allah does not increase a servant who forgives except in honour. And no one humbles himself for the sake of Allah except that Allah raises him in rank."

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CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam Muslim: from Yahya ibn Ayyub, Qutaybah ibn Sa'id and 'Ali ibn Hujr, from Isma'il ibn Ja'far, from al-'Ala' ibn 'Abd al-Rahman, from his father 'Abd al-Rahman ibn Ya'qub, from Abu Hurayrah رضى الله عنه.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam Muslim in Sahih Muslim, Book of Virtue, Good Manners and Joining the Ties of Kinship, chapter on the encouragement of forgiveness and humility, Hadith No. 2588.

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih Muslim.

Source: https://sunnah.com/muslim:2588

HADITH — SAHIH MUSLIM, NO. 1631

حَدَّثَنَا يَحْيَى بْنُ أَيُّوبَ، وَقُتَيْبَةُ، - يَعْنِي ابْنَ سَعِيد - وَابْنُ حُجْرٍ قَالُوا حَدَّثَنَا إِسْمَاعِيلُ، - هُوَ ابْنُ جَعْفَرٍ - عَنِ الْعَلاَءِ، عَنْ أَبِيهِ، عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ، أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم قَالَ « إِذَا مَاتَ الإِنْسَانُ انْقَطَعَ عَنْهُ عَمَلُهُ إِلاَّ مِنْ ثَلاَثَةٍ إِلاَّ مِنْ صَدَقَةٍ جَارِيَةٍ أَوْ عِلْمٍ يُنْتَفَعُ بِهِ أَوْ وَلَدٍ صَالِحٍ يَدْعُو لَهُ ».

TRANSLATION:

From Abu Hurayrah رضى الله عنه, that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "When a person dies, his deeds come to an end except for three: an ongoing charity, knowledge that is benefited from, or a righteous child who prays for him."

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam Muslim: from Yahya ibn Ayyub, Qutaybah ibn Sa'id and 'Ali ibn Hujr, from Isma'il ibn Ja'far, from al-'Ala' ibn 'Abd al-Rahman, from his father 'Abd al-Rahman ibn Ya'qub, from Abu Hurayrah رضى الله عنه.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam Muslim in Sahih Muslim, Book of Wills, chapter on the reward that reaches a person after his death, Hadith No. 1631.

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih Muslim.

Source: https://sunnah.com/muslim:1631

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