Dawah Talim Tazkiyah
DA’WAH, TA’LÎM AND TAZKIYAH

THE THREE TASKS OF RASÛLULLÂH

Tafsîr of the Âyah

لقد من الله على المؤمنين إذ بعث فيهم رسولًا من أنفسهم يتلو عليهم آياته و يوكِّفهم و يعلِّمهم الكتاب و الحِكْمَة و إن كانوا من قِبَل لَهُ صِلَالٌ مُّبَينٌ ۖ (آل عمران : 164) (الله تعالى

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Introduction

Allâh ☪ has made Nabî ☪ such a role model, that the person who is closest to him will be the most beloved in the eyes of Allâh ☪.

The booklet before you is an introduction to three tasks of Nabî ☪ which Allâh ☪ ordained upon him as his responsibilities in the Noble Qur’ân.

The first responsibility of the Nabî ☪ was to recite the verses of the Qur’ân to the Ummah. This is the propagation of Dîn. The second was to purify the souls of the believers. This is Tazkiyah. The third responsibility was to teach the Ummah the Qur’ân and Al-Hikmah.

In this booklet these tasks have been explained in some detail in the light of the commentaries of reliable and respected Ulamâ.

It is hoped that by means of this work, Allâh ☪ blesses us with the correct understanding of these responsibilities and the ability to fulfil the rights of these responsibilities. These blessings will enable us to emulate Nabî ☪ and to attain perfection by adhering to his Sunnah so that we attain the proximity of Almighty Allâh ☪.

Every believer, together with propagating Dîn and encouraging others to do so, should also be concerned about his own spiritual reformation as well as that of others. It is essential that a person adorns his own life with good actions by studying the knowledge of the Qur’ân and the Sunnah and one should encourage others to do the same.

May Allâh ☪ grant us the divine ability to take as much part as possible in these three domains and may He make us the the firm adherents and devotees to every Sunnah of Rasûlullâh ☪, hence granting us love and acceptance. Âmîn

(Shaykh) Fadhlur Rahman Azami
The Responsibilities of the Ambiyā\(^{1}\)

Allāh ﷺ says:

\[ 
\text{لقد من الله على المؤمنين إذ بعث فيهم رسولًا من أنفسهم يتلو عليهم آياته و يركبهم و يعلّمهم الكتاب و الحكمة و إن كانوا من قبل لفي ضلال مبين} \]

(Al 'Imran : 164)

Allāh ﷺ has shown great kindness to the believers, when He sent a Messenger to them from among themselves to recite His Signs to them and purify them and teach them the Book and Wisdom, before that they were clearly misguided.\(^{2}\)

This theme is also mentioned in \(\text{Sūrah Jumu‘ah}:\)

\[ 
\text{هو الذي بعث في الأميين رسولًا منهم يتلوا عليهم آياته و يركبهم و يعلّمهم الكتاب و الحكمة و إن كانوا من قبل لفي ضلال مبين} \]

(Al-Jumu‘ah : 2)

It is He who raised among the unlettered people a Messenger from among them to recite His verses to them, purify them and teach them the Book and Wisdom, before that they were clearly misguided.\(^{3}\)

Allāmah Ālūsī\(^{4}\) mentions in \(\text{Rūḥul Ma‘ānī} (1:386)\) the \(\text{Tafsîr}\) (commentary) of the following \(\text{Âyah}\(^{5}\) :  

\[ 
\]

\(^{1}\) Hereunder, the author presents the verses dealing with the subject of discussion. These verses have almost identical words and interpretations, although the sequence of words in one of them is slightly different.

\(^{2}\) \(\text{Sūrah Al 'Imrān}, \text{Verse 164}\)

\(^{3}\) \(\text{Sūrah Jumu‘ah}, \text{Verse 2}\)

\(^{4}\) Allāmah Abul Fadhl Shihābud Din As-Sayyid Mahmūd Al-Alūsī, a great Commentator of the Qur‘ān and Mufti of Baghdad, passed away in 1270 A.H.

\(^{5}\) The exegesis of this particular verse has been brought; although the explanation applies to all the aforementioned verses.
Our Lord! Raise up among them a Messenger from them to recite Your Signs to them, to teach them the Book and Wisdom and to purify them.\(^6\) (2:128)

The Messenger will recite to them what is revealed upon him of the Signs which point towards the Oneness of Allâh, Prophethood and the Hereafter.

Some scholars have interpreted the same section of the verse in the following manner:

The Messenger will inform them of the people before him and those who will come after him until the Day of Judgement.

The Messenger will teach them the book by explaining to them its words, the manner of its recitation and by enlightening them of its apparent and hidden meanings.

[Here Allâmâh Âlûsi has given four different explanations for the word Al-Hikmah (Wisdom)]

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\(^6\) Sûrah Baqarah Verse 128
The placing of objects where they belong.  
1. Something that extinguishes the flame of Hubbud Dunyâ from the hearts (of the Believers).  
2. The explanation and understanding of Dîn  
3. The Sunnah of th.e Messenger which is a manifestation of the Book.

(And will purify them)

The Messenger will cleanse them of the filth of polytheism, the impurity of doubt and the pollution of sins.

alludes to At-Takhliyah whilst ) to At-Tahliyah.9

Perhaps the reason for At-Tahliyah being mentioned before At-Takhliyah in this verse is to show its importance and rank over At-Takhliyah10. [Rûhul Maînî Volume 1, Page 387]

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7 The actual text from the commentary is وَضَعَ كَيْنَمَ and is not restricted to objects. It refers to both the animate and inanimate. i.e. treat people and objects according to their nature.

8 the adoration of the worldly life

9 At-Takhliyah literally means 'to empty' and At-Tahliyah means 'to adorn or to beautify'. Here these words are used to explain two stages of Tazkiyah (purification). At-Takhliyah here refers to the stage when a person rids his soul and mind from the impurity and filth of polytheism and doubt. At-Tahliyah refers to adorning that same soul and mind with the teachings and actions of Islâm.

10 This text is quite technical. Here the commentator is trying to answer a question which arises with regards to the sequence of purification and education. Understand this with a simple example. If a person wants to fill a dirty glass with pure milk, he has to first clean the glass and then pour the milk. It doesn’t make any sense if the person pours the milk first. In the same way purification is a means of ridding the soul and mind of impurities and education is a means of adorning the soul and mind, so the sequence of the terms should be the other way round, i.e. At-Tahliyah should precede At-Takhliyah. The commentator explains this sequence. He says that At-Tahliyah is mentioned first due to it being nobler than At-Takhliyah. (Allâh knows best.)
The previously mentioned verses of both *Sūrah Jumu‘ah* [62:2] and *Sūrah Āl ‘Imrân* [3:164] have identical words. The only difference is the sequence; therefore the interpretation is similar.

Allāh accepted the *Du‘ā* of Ibrāhim and Ismā‘īl and after a designated time, sent a Messenger who possessed these three attributes. Allāh has mentioned these attributes of this Messenger in the *Noble Qur‘ān*:

(1) In *Sūrah Baqarah* verse 151
(2) *Sūrah Āl ‘Imran*, Verse 164
(3) And in *Sūrah Jumu‘ah*, Verse 2

In the aforementioned verses, the order of the attributes are the same, i.e. firstly, recitation of the *Āyāt* (verses) is mentioned, then *Tazkiyāh* (Purification) and lastly, *Ta‘lîm* (teaching) of the Book and Al-Hikmah.

In the verse where the *Du‘ā* of Ibrāhim is mentioned [*Sūrah Baqarah*:128] the sequence changes slightly. In this *Āyah*, recitation of the *Āyāt* is mentioned first, then *Ta‘lîm* of the Book and Al-Hikmah and lastly, *Tazkiyāh*.

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11 These verses have already been mentioned and translated on page 3.

12 Supplication or prayer.

13 For the rest of the booklet, three terms will be used over and again. Each term refers to a particular part of the verse.

1. *Tilawah* (recitation) or *Da‘wah* (propagation) refers to  يَتَّبَعُ عَلَيْهِمْ َآيَةٍ وَيَوْزِعُهُمْ

2. *Tazkiyāh* (purification) refers to  يَهُدُوْ لَهُمْ الْكِتَابَ وَ الْحِكْمَةَ

3. *Ta‘lîm* (teaching/education) refers to  يَهُدُوْ لَهُمْ الْكِتَابَ وَ الْحِكْمَةَ
Commentary on These Three Duties

The Commentary of Maulana Ashraf ‘Ali Thanwi

Allamah Ālūsi states that the first duty of recitation means that Rasūlullah should recite and propagate the verses of Tauhīd and Risālah and other important matters (such as the hereafter) to the Sahābah.

Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi has mentioned in Bayānul Qur’ān after the Tafsīr of Sūrah Al-‘Imrān in Masā’ilus Sulûk:

In these verses there is firstly a confirmation of ‘Ilmul Asrār and of Turuqus Sulûk. This has been explained in Rūhul Ma‘ānî. It states that recitation refers to propagating the verses of Tauhīd and Risālah (Prophethood). Tazkiyah (Purification) involves calling people towards the Kalima Tauheed which in itself is an expression of Tauhīd and Risālah (as this is a means of purification from polytheism). 'Teaching the Book' refers to teaching the words of the Noble Qur’ān, and teaching Al-Hikmah refers to explaining the hidden meanings of the Noble Qur’ān.

Tilawah is mentioned first as this is the introduction. Tazkiyah is mentioned next as purity [from polytheism etc.] is the first characteristic a Believer is adorned with. Ta’līm follows next which is one’s need after Iman. The sequence of the last two attributes shows that At-Takhliyah (of which Tazkiyah is a component) precedes At-Tahliyah (of which Ta’līm is a component). Now the question arises as to why At-Tahliyah is mentioned before At-Takhliyah in Sūrah Baqarah,

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14 Hakīmul Ummah Maulanā Ashraf 'Alī Thanwi, great scholar from India. Compiled over 1000 books including Behishti Zewar. Passed away in 1362 A.H.

15 Masā’ilus Sulûk: This is a section devoted to discuss issues relating to the method of attaining the recognition of the Almighty. The Author brings such a section after every Sūrah.

16 Knowledge not attained by means of a mortal being.

17 Paths to the recognition of the Almighty.
this is perhaps to highlight the rank of *At-Tahliyah* above *At-Takhliyah*.  
[Rûhul Ma‘ânî]

*Maulanâ Ashraf ‘Alî Thanwi*  says further:

The changing of the sequence in the verses shows that *At-Tahliyah* can precede *At-Takhliyah* if the circumstances demand that. According to the Sufis both are practiced upon\(^{18}\).  

[Bayânul Qur’ân volume 1, page 292]

**An Extract from the Lecture of Maulânâ Inâmul Hasan\(^{19}\)**

Hadratjî Maulânâ Inâmul Hasan  once gave a lecture to the Ulamâ regarding *Da’wah*, *Tazkiyah* and *Ta’lîm* during an *Ijtima’* held in Chandpûr which is in the province of *Bajnûr*, on the 15\(^{th}\) *Shabân* 1395 AH (23\(^{rd}\) August 1975). This is an extract from his lecture;

\[
\text{Allâh \ has said:}
\]

\[
\text{هوَ الَّذِي بَعَثَ فِي الأمِينِ رَسُولاً مِنْهُمَ يَتَّلُوُ عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتِه وَ يَرْكُبُهُم وَ يَعْلَمُهُمْ الْكِتَابَ وَ الْحِكْمَةَ}
\]

\[
\text{Allâh \ sent *Rasûlullâh* \ with three duties;}
\]

1. *Da’wah*
2. *Tazkiyah* and
3. *Ta’lîm*.

*Da’wah* was the primary duty of the Messenger as the existence of the other two depends on it. During the era of *Rasûlullâh* and the *Sahâbah*, it was *Da’wah* that gave life to *Tazkiyah* and *Ta’lîm*. *Da’wah*  

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\(^{18}\) According to the Sufis one’s *Tazkiyah* can occur by either cleansing the soul first and then adorning it with good deeds i.e. *At-Takhliyah* then *At-Tahliyah*. And in certain circumstances *Tazkiyah* can occur by firstly carrying out good deeds and then cleansing the soul i.e. *At-Tahliyah* then *At-Takhliyah*. Here *Maulanâ Ashraf ‘Alî Thanwi* mentions that the second process of *Tazkiyah* is also established from the Qur’ân.

\(^{19}\) *Maulânâ Inâmul Hasan* was the Amir of the Tablíghi effort. An effort which has helped revive the effort of commanding towards good and forbidding evil.
is essential in this day and age for the very same reason. (Da’wat ki Basirat Aur Us ka Fahm wa Idraak, Pages 27 and 28, Maulana Muhammad Shahed Saheb)

The First Duty of the Ambiyā was Da’wah

From the aforementioned works of Allâmah Âlûsi, Maulânâ Thânwi and Maulânâ Inâmul Hasan, it is evident that the first duty of Rasûlullâh was Da’wah. By reciting the verses of the Noble Qur‘ân to the Sahâbah, Rasûlullâh called them towards the oneness of Allâh and Islâm. The Sahâbah were native Arabs and therefore easily understood the verses of Tauhîd, Risâlah and the Âkhira (Hereafter).

It was by means of this Da’wah that their hearts were cleansed from the impurity of disbelief and polytheism, purified from doubt and uncertainty. Furthermore, this Da’wah purified them of all their past habits and sins. This is Tazkiyah, the second duty of the Messenger. Finally, by studying the literal and intricate meanings of the Noble Qur‘ân together with the blessed sayings of Rasûlullâh, the Sahâbah were adorned with the complete Shari’ah and the beauty of the Sunnah. As a result, the Sahâbah became beautified with all kinds of wonderful attributes and were free from all evil traits.

*Ta’lim* of the Book entails understanding the literal meanings of the words of the Qur‘ân and it entails learning how to recite it correctly. *Ta’lim* of Al-Hikmah entails understanding the laws mentioned in its verses, its intricate meanings and wisdoms. This is apparent from the commentary of Allâmah Âlûsi.

The Commentary of Allâmah Shabbir Ahmad Uthmâni

Allâmah Shabbir Ahmad Uthmâni commented on the verse of Âl-‘Imrân as follows:

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20 The Companions of the Messenger

21 Allâmah Shabbir Uthmâni was a scholar of great status. Amongst his achievements was the completion of Tafsîr Uthmâni, a great exegesis of the Noble Qur‘ân and initiating of a commentary on Sahih Muslim (this was later completed by Muftî Taqi Uthmâni).
To summarise this verse four aspects from the life of the Messenger ﷺ have been mentioned:

(1) **Recitation of the verses** (to the Sahâbah). Due to Arabic being the mother tongue of the Sahâbah, they understood the literal meanings and acted upon the verses.

(2) **Purification of the souls.** (To rid the soul from all types of egoism, polytheism and sins.²²)

(3) **Teaching the Book** (explaining the intricate meanings of the Noble Qur’ân). The need for such explaining arose when doubts occurred in the minds of the Sahâbah due to them relying on the common usage of certain words. Rasûlullâh ﷺ would thereafter explain the true meaning and context of the verse. By means of which the doubts of his companions would be cleared.

To cite an example of the above scenario Allah Ta’ala says in Sûrah An’âm:²³

```arabic
الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَ لَمْ يَلْبِسُوا إِيمَانَهُمْ بَطْرُمٍ ...
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There were a few verses which needed the clarification of the Messenger ﷺ.

(4) **Teaching Al-Hikmah** (To teach the deeper meanings of Al-Hikmah) and to explain the hidden meanings and intricacies and inform the Sahâbah of the deep wisdoms of Shari’ah. This was either done explicitly or implicitly. Through the grace of the Almighty and His help that a naive nation, who for centuries were in gross ignorance and were drowning in clear misguidance were saved. Within a few years, by means of the teaching and company of Rasûlullâh ﷺ they became guides and teachers for the entire humanity. For the abovementioned reasons it is crucial that they recognise this great bounty and never even forgetfully sadden the heart of the Messenger ﷺ. (Fawâíd Shabbiriyyah – Sûrah Al-‘Imrân )

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²² refers to exerting oneself in the purification of souls.

²³ This is Surâh An’âm : 82: “Those who believe and obscure not their belief by wrongdoing, theirs is safety; and they are rightly guided.”

The Companions understood wrongdoing to refer to general sins which meant that even the smallest of sins would deny a believer from safety and would deprive a person from being rightly guided. This caused them to be greatly perturbed. Rasulullah later explained to them that in this verse wrongdoing refers to ascribing partners with Allah and not general sins. This explanation removed their anxiety.
Other Verses and Ahâdith explaining the Missions of the Ambiyâ

In all the aforementioned verses of the Noble Qur’ân, the first duty of the Messenger is to propagate by means of reciting the verses of the Noble Qur’ân.

Imâm Bukhârî mentions in his Al-Jami24, that the first revelation consisted of the first five verses of Sûrah ‘Alaq (Iqra’). These verses are an introduction to Allâh. They mention that He is the Creator. They explain that Allâh created man from a clot of blood, He is the true Cherisher of man and that Allâh provides the creations’ necessities and helps them reach their decreed potential. He is most Kind, He taught man by means of the Pen and taught Man what he knew not. Read in the name of that Lord!

After the first revelation, a lengthy intermission prevailed. Thereafter, the verses of Sûrah Muddathir were revealed. It was in this Sûrah25 that Rasûlullâh received the command of Da’wah.

Фُذِّكُ كَا نُفَرِّقُن مِنْ يَحَافُ وَعَيْدَ

Stand up and warn the people, and express the greatness of your Cherisher.

In other words, now inform others of the Rabb you have recognised.

After this revelation, the message from Allâh came continuously for ten to twelve years. During these years, revelation was confined to Tauhid, Prophethood and the Hereafter. Rasûlullâh used to propagate these verses to the people by reciting them.

فَذِّكُ كَا نُفَرِّقُن مِنْ يَحَافُ وَعَيْدَ

By reciting the verses of the Noble Qur’ân, he would reinforce the faith of the people, purify their hearts from the impurities of doubt and

24 Referring to a Hadîth of Bukhârî.
25 Sûrah Muddathir Verse 3
polytheism, cleansing their hearts of the false beliefs of the polytheists and the People of the Book. [Rûhul Ma‘ânî 4:114]

After this period of ten to twelve years, when the Ahkâm (commands of Salāh, Saum etc) were revealed, the details of these Ahkâm were explained to the Sahâbah and were practically demonstrated to them. As the verses were revealed, their words, meanings, purposes, intricacies and wisdoms were explained to the Sahâbah. In this manner, their hearts and minds were adorned with the knowledge and understanding of Dīn.

One stage of Tazkiyah was that which was achieved only through listening to the verses of the Noble Qur’ān being recited upon them and by means of propagation. Through this method of Tazkiyah, they achieved:

- the conviction of the attributes of Allâh.
- the certainty that success lies only in the Sunnah of Rasūlullâh.
- the true belief and reality of the Hereafter,
- faith in the existence of Jannah and Jahannam,
- the belief that none other than the Almighty was responsible for every gain and every setback,
- the knowledge that only the Almighty gave life and took it away,
- the understanding that true life was the life after death,
- the realization that this world was merely a temporary abode,
- purity from the uncertainty and polytheism and from the false beliefs of the people of the past.

By virtue of these attributes the Sahâbah overcame and endured mountains of calamities and remained steadfast.

The Sahâbah were elevated to another stage of Tazkiyyah after the revelation of Ahkâm pertaining to refraining from sin.

وَ ذَرُوْاْ ظَاهرَ الْأَثْمِ وَ بَاطِنَهُ

Refrain from both apparent and inconspicuous sins.\textsuperscript{26}

\textsuperscript{26} Sûrah An’âm : 120
The Sahâbah immediately complied when the orders came from Allâh to refrain from malice, enmity, miserliness, lethargy, arrogance and other maladies of the heart. Likewise, when the prohibitions of adultery, theft, alcoholism, false accusation, backbiting, harbouring ill-thoughts, evil glances and other sins were revealed, the Sahâbah did not hesitate to comply. When the Sahâbah were prohibited from abstaining from good deeds, they complied to this and were purified even further. This final stage of not abstaining from good deeds is the highest level of Tazkiyah.

If we take this meaning of Tazkiyah from the supplication of Ibrâhim (2:128), then the point made by Allâmah Âlûsi (below) with regards to the sequence of Ta’îm and Tazkiyah will be understood and held in high regard.

Allâmah Âlûsi says in the Tafsîr of Sûrah Baqarah, verse 151:

Allâh placed Tazkiyah before Ta’îm in this verse (2:151) and in the supplication of Ibrâhim (2:128) after Ta’îm to show that in both places the intended meaning is different. For both sequences there is an explanation. (Rûhul Ma’ânî Volume 2 Page 128)

Where Tazkiyah is mentioned before Ta’îm the first meaning of Tazkiyah is intended i.e. purification from the impurities of doubt and polytheism from the false beliefs of the Polytheists and the People of the Book. Where Ta’îm succeeds Tazkiyah the second stage of Tazkiyah is intended i.e. conviction in the attributes of Allâh and the Hereafter etc.

From this, we learn that in both places Tazkiyah has different implications and there is an explanation for its position in both verses.

Allâmah Âlûsi explains in Volume 2 page 18

Ibrâhim placed Tazkiyah after Ta’îm referring to the higher stage of Tazkiyah and this stage can only be attained after Ta’îm of the Book and Al Hikmah. The remaining verses from the various Sûrahs refer to the lower stage of Tazkiyah, i.e. purification from polytheism etc. It is for this reason that Tazkiyah was mentioned before Ta’îm in those
verses, because Ta‘lîm of the Book and Al-Hikmah can not be achieved without this purification. Disbelief would be an obstacle in this Ta‘lîm. 27

Conclusion

Further on Allâmah Âlûsi brings a few other interpretations and then concludes as follows:

The most that can be said about this is: Since Ta‘lîm removed uncertainty and all types of evil from the lives of the Sahâbah it was a means of purification for them. So this sequence [Ta‘lîm before Tazkiyah] shows that the action which leads to the consequence is brought to represent the consequence. Like the example of an archer and death in the technicalities of the Arabs when they say: “He shot him, thus killed him.” Understand like so! 28

It is for this reason that in the Tafsîr of Surah Baqarah verse 151, Allâmah Âlûsi holds Tazkiyah to mean the negation of doubt and polytheism or the falsification of the beliefs of the polytheists and beliefs of the People of the Book.

However, in his Tafsîr of (2:128), he has decided to combine both stages of Tazkiyah:

He will purify them from the impurities of polytheism, the filth of uncertainty and the stains of sin 29.

Here Allâh Ta‘ala mentions one additional explanation of purification viz. purity from the stains of sin.

Glory be to Allâh, What an excellent explanation!

27 Rûhul Ma‘ânî Volume 2, Page 18
28 In the Arabic language, when a person says, “He shot him, thus killed him” shooting is metaphorically associated with killing, whereas shooting does not always necessitate killing. In the like manner since the eradication of uncertainty and sin is associated with Ta‘lîm, here it is mentioned that it does eradicate the above evils.
29 Rûhul Ma‘ânî Volume 1, Page 387
Final Note

From the excellent commentary of these verses, we learn that a perfect adherent to the Sunnah is that person who as well as giving Da’wah, is also devoted to ‘Ilm\(^{30}\) and is involved in the Tazkiyah of himself and others.

Students of Dīn and Ulamā should pay special attention to this. We should continue taking part in both the efforts of Da’wah and Tazkiyah. Ideally we should fulfil the rights of all three activities (Da’wah, Ta’līm and Tazkiyah). Shari’ah promotes accumulation (of all these responsibilities) and does not encourage the distribution (of these responsibilities).\(^{31}\)

May Allāh \(\text{ ﷺ}\) grant us the ability to bring these attributes into our lives!

و الحمد لله اولاً و آخراً

(Shaykh) Fadhlur Rahman Azami
15\(^{th}\) Jumadal Ula 1426 AH
22\(^{nd}\) June 2005

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\(^{30}\) This refers to Islamic Knowledge

\(^{31}\) Here the Shaykh concludes by saying that Shari’ah encourages that everyone should try to take part in all the responsibilities of the Messenger \(\text{ ﷺ} \). Shari’ah does not teach us to allocate the different responsibilities on different individuals or upon particular groups.