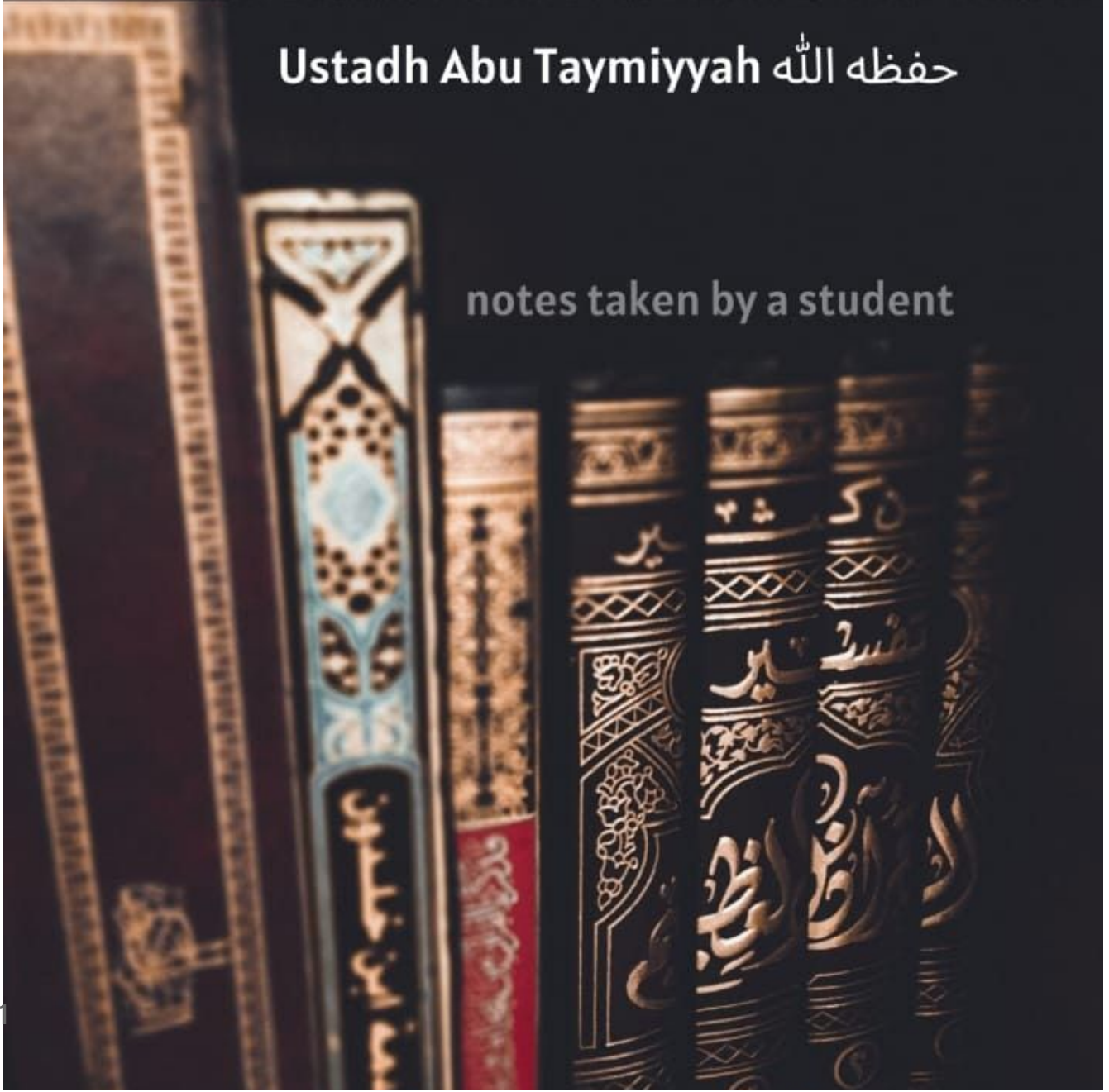


The Art Of Memorisation

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notes taken by a student



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بسم الله والحمد لله والصلاة والسلام على رسول الله وعلى آله وأصحابه ومن تبعهم بإحسان إلى يوم الدين.

10 Points on How To Benefit From What We Read

First: Know What You Read Before Reading It

Before you read, have knowledge on what you're actually reading. Don't just come to any book thinking, "Oh, this book looks great, I'll buy and read it." This can be a problem, as the scholars mentioned, "The food of elders is poison for infants." If we give a baby spaghetti or fried rice, this could harm him or even lead to his death.

A beginner student of knowledge should know whether what he's reading befits his level. One might be good at arabic but it requires more knowledge beforehand to read certain books. Certain scholars mentioned in their introduction that sometimes they use certain phrases or terminologies and they intend different meanings.

There's a fitnah in Yemen called "the fitnah of lessons". 30 lessons used to open up every single week, 20-30 different books. With so many classes to choose from, some of the students tend to be very excited and want to join all of them like a little kid who hasn't been in a candy shop then he is allowed to go to one, this kid would want to buy everything. If we don't know how to attain this knowledge in the best possible way, we would end up spending so much time jumping here and there with little benefits (faidah). Rather, taking knowledge level by level will save us a lot of time later on.

Second: Read With Present Mind

Do not read except when you're focused, when your mind is present. If your mind is all over the place, you won't take maximum benefits from what you read. As we mentioned before, phone and other distracting things should be put aside when studying.

Third: Build Motivation That You'll Note Every Gem & Benefits

When you start reading, build motivation that you won't leave off any gems or benefits from this book except that you noted it down. Sometimes you're tired and say, "Let me just skim through it," No. Rather, whatever beautiful gems and benefits you find, you note it down. How often do we hear gems from scholars or students of knowledge that might benefit us later on but it slips away because we didn't write it down?

Fourth: Have A Pen

Make sure you have a pen when you're reading. Imam al Bukhari has a chapter in his Sahih called "Writing Down Knowledge". He used a companion as an example. Abu Hurairah, who memorized most of the hadith, said, "There's no one who knew more hadith than me except Abdullah ibn 'Amr ibn al-'Ash because he used to write down knowledge and I don't." This is before Rasullah made dua for Abu Hurairah then he surpassed everyone.

Noting down knowledge goes a long way. The feeling when later on you find the benefits you're looking for in your notes is a feeling that words can't describe.

Fifth: Carry A Notepad

When you're reading, make sure to carry a notepad so you can write down any benefits you pass by. The poet said, "It's a must for a student of knowledge to carry scrap papers, he writes down whenever he is riding or walking." There was a brother who heard a benefit from Shaykh Abdulkarim Al Khudair in a taxi, he wrote it down at the moment. If you don't have anything, then everytime you hear a benefit it will just pass by.

There's a brother who works as a taxi driver. When Ustadh got into the car, he had a pen and Sahihain (al Bukhari & Muslim) that he's memorising. Everytime we stop at a traffic light, he brings his book and he gets his pen. His car looks like a maktabah (library) with books here and there.

Ibnul Jama'ah al Kinani said:

الحكمة ضالة المؤمن، يأخذها حيث وجدها

The wisdom, for the believer, is like his lost property, wherever he finds it, he takes it, he picks it up.

You will hear a lot of things, sometimes it isn't even a benefit of a book; someone says to you something very wise, note it down, it may benefit you later on.

Sixth: Write On The Cover

When youre reading, any benefit you pass by, write it on the cover of your book. This will help you narrow down the benefits you get from this book and make it easily accessible.

Seventh: Compile Similar Benefits

Go through your notes and compile those that are of the same topic. For example some benefits like reading the Qur'an or going to the masjid are under the same umbrella which is Things That Increase Your Imaan, compile them together.

Eighth: Have Exercise Books

If you want to get maximum benefits, make sure you have exercise books. For example a book for fiqh, a different book for aqidah, another book for akhlaq, and so on. What's the difference between the seventh and eighth? This exercise book is broader than compiling similar topics.

For example when you do the seventh, you get benefits in the topic of wudhu, then you also get benefits under the topic of salah. Wudhu and salah fall under the subject of Fiqh, so you can put them on the Fiqh exercise book. With this you can have an encyclopedia of benefits.

Ninth: Revise by Yourself & Someone Else

So that you may solidify these benefits, make sure you do 2 things: revise them every now and then and try to revise it with someone else. Maybe you go through what you've written down once a month or once a week and you also revise it with your wife or children or someone else, discuss them; you'll find this benefits you more than anyone and also benefits the others.

The more you discuss it, the more it becomes solid. One of the best ways to solidify information is to bring it up to someone else. Imam an Nawawi in his explanation of Sahih Muslim said, "Revising with someone who is strong in a field for an hour is more beneficial than browsonigboks and memorising for hours on end or even days."

This is why having a strong teacher whom you accompany will help you a lot. There are different levels, for example the teacher in Prophet's masjid, many students overcrowd him and you'll be fortunate to have a question answered. But to have someone who is much stronger than you around you all the time, you can go back and forth and have discussions with him, this benefits both the teacher and you hugely. Remember 1 of the 6 things Imam Shafi'i mentioned before is accompanying teachers.

Another point Ustadh observed in students of knowledge's environment. There might be a new student who comes to the university, barely studied anything and needs someone to explain him about the pillars of salah or other basic things. He runs to a couple of brothers and they say to him, "Stick to the scholars." A whole year might pass and a class that suits his level doesn't open in the Haram or he can't find it anywhere. Instead, he could've asked another brother who has preceded him in the university to teach him the basics. But he didn't do it because he was told to stick to the scholars. If you can find the scholars to study under, then be it. But he oversteps the brother who can teach him at a time when no one else is teaching it.

He can remain for years without having studied the basics of the religion because of the lack of humility and hearing the wrong advice, take knowledge wherever you find it. Indeed, senior students of knowledge aren't the same level as the teachers in the Haram but you can still benefit from them, go back and forth, or have a discussion that you might never get a chance to with the teachers in the Haram.

All of these points can also be applied while using the phone, because in this day and age we struggle to carry exercise books or papers.

Tenth: Document Benefits From Internet

Document the knowledge and benefits we find on the internet, of course we need to verify it first. You can put together benefits you get from whatsapp or twitter by starring the messages or putting the tweets to bookmark then copy-paste it to your notes or word then you might want to print it. Shaykh Muhammad Bazmool released a book containing all the benefits he wrote on facebook.