SACRIFICE IN THE PURSUIT OF KNOWLEDGE

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وَحدَةٌ لا شَريِّكِ لَهُ، وَأَشْهِدُ أَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا عِبَادُهُ وَرَسُولُهُ، الَّذِي بَلَغَ الرُّسُالَةَ وَأَدَى الأَمَانَةَ وَنَصَحَ الأُمَّةَ وَكَشَفَ الْغَمَةَ، اللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ وَسَلَّمْ وَبَارَكَ عَلَى سَيِّدِنَا مُحَمَّدٍ وَعَلَى أَلِهِ وَأَصْحَابِهِ أَجْمَعِينَ،

أما بعدُ، فَيَا عِبَادُ اللَّهِ، إِنَّكُمْ إِبَأَيُّ بِتَقْوَى اللَّهِ وَطَاعَتِهِ فَقُدْ فَازُوْتُمْ وَتَزَوَّدُوْنَ فَإِنَّ خَيْرَ الزَّادِ التَّقْوَا.
• In conjunction with the "UTM New Students Orientation Week Session 2013/14, the khutbah title is "Sacrifice In Pursuit of Knowledge."
• Syeikh Abu Hamid Muhammad al-Ghazali in his book ‘Ihya’ Ulumuddin said: *There is no religion or teaching in the world from the past until today that is able to match Islam in superiority of knowledge.*
• This is proven when the first revelation was revealed to the Messenger s.a.w emphasizing on knowledge. Allah says in surah al-‘Alaq 96 verse 1-5,
1. *Proclaim! (or read!) In the name of Thy Lord and Cherisher, who created.

2. Created man, out of a (mere) clot of congealed Blood:

3. *Proclaim! And Thy Lord is Most Bountiful,

4. He who taught (the use of) the pen,

5. Taught man that which He knew not.
A person with knowledge is honored by Allah SWT, His angels and mankind wherever they are. This is explained by Allah SWT in The Quran, surah Ali-‘Imran verse 18,
• Which means:
• There is no god but He: that is the witness of Allah, His angels, and those endued with knowledge, standing firm on justice. There is no god but He, the Exalted In power, the wise.
Imam Shafi'i Allaah in his famous words of wisdom said:

“O my brother, the conditions for obtaining knowledge are six. Intelligence, determination, earnest, enough provision, teacher and a long period.”
• Another tradition of the Islamic scholars and academicians is to travel searching for a teacher to seek knowledge. There is no scholar who has never been out of their hometown to seek knowledge.
• In fact there are some scholars who prohibited a person from taking knowledge from people who have never travelled as Yahya ibn Ma'in said:
• “There are four people who cannot be derived good and benefit from them. One of the four people is someone who only studied in his country, and did not travel to seek hadith.”
• The tradition of travelling in search of knowledge began since the time of Sahabah (Companions of Rasulullah).
• One of the famous stories is the traveling of Jabir bin Abdullah, a young sahabah. He bought a donkey and travelled to Syria for a month just to hear a hadith from Abdullah bin Unais.
• This attitude is emulated by the next generation.
• History recorded hadith scholars who wrote six books of hadith (Sahih Bukhari, Sahih Muslim, Sunan Abu Dawud, the Sunni Tirmidhi, Sunan Ibn Majah and Sunan An-Nasa'i) spent decades traveling from one country to another for the sake of seeking knowledge and compiling hadith.
• The scholars of hadith set aside some money for that purpose. Nevertheless, for the sake of knowledge, they are willing to spend anything.
• It is reported that Imam Rabiah bin Abdul Rahman al-Ra'yi spent 30 thousand dinars (around RM 15 million) for his studies.
• There are many among us who do not know who is Rabiah al-Ra'yi. He was the teacher of Imam Malik ibn Anas (founder of Maliki school). Likewise with the other imams.
• Imam Malik as an example, was forced to mortgage his house to accommodate his study.
• Dear brothers,
• Let us together see an example of sacrifice in the pursuit of knowledge by Imam Shafie, founder of Shafie school.
• Imam al-Shafie was born in Gaza, Palestine in 150H/767M. His real name is Muhammad ibn Idris as-Shafie.
• He was from the tribe of Quraysh and was an orphan without a father. At the age of 10 his mother took him to Mecca for Hajj and there he studied.
• In Mecca Imam Al-Shafie started his studies under Muslim bin Khalid al-Zanji, the mufti of Mecca at that time.
• The most famous book of knowledge at that time was al-Muwattha’, written by Imam Malik ibn Anas (founder of the Maliki school), and Imam al-Shafie at the age of 15 has already memorized the entire book.
• Imam al-Shafie then migrated to Medina to study under the author of the book, Imam Malik ibn Anas. Imam al-Shafie was only 20 years old and he continued to study with Imam Malik until Imam Malik death in the year 179H/796M.
• Imam al-Shafi distinguished himself as the brightest student of Imam Malik ibn Anas and won a public recognition.
• Imam al-Shafie took over the place of Imam Malik bin Anas as a teacher in the Prophet's Mosque in Madinah until he was offered a position by the Governor of Yemen.
• Imam al-Shafie office in the State of Yemen was not long soon as Imam Shafie was vilified as a follower of the Shia sect.
• In addition to other various conspiracies, he was chained and sent to prison in Baghdad, which is the center of the Abbasid Dynasty.
• Imam al-Shafie was taken to the Caliph Harun al-Rashid and he managed to prove innocence.
• The efficiency of Imam al-Shafie in defending himself with various religious arguments caused Harun al-Rashid to be attracted to him.
• Imam al-Shafie was released and allowed to reside in Baghdad. Here Imam al-Shafie acquainted with the students of Imam Abu Hanifa (founder of the Hanafi school) and studied from them, particularly Muhammad ibn al-Hasan al-Syaibani.
• This atmosphere provided a very significant advantages for Imam al-Shafie, in which he had the opportunity to study and compare between the teachings of Islamic law, i.e. the thoughts of Imam Malik bin Anas and Imam Abu Hanifah.
• In 188H/804M, Imam al-Shafie migrated to Egypt. Prior to that, he made a brief stop at Mecca and there he was given the honor to conduct religious classes. Imam al-Shafie was then recognized as an imam.
In 194H/810M, Imam al-Shafie returned to Baghdad and he was offered the position of a Qadhi (Judge) of the Abbasid dynasty. He refused and stayed for 4 years in Baghdad.
• Imam al-Shafie then returned to Egypt and focus his teachings there. Daud, the son of 'Ali was once asked about Imam al-Shafie superiority over the other figures at the time, he said:
• "Al-Shafie has several advantages compared to the others. He was an aristocrat, he was true in his belief and religion, very generous, had the knowledge to distinguish between authentic and weak hadith, nasikh, mansukh, memorized the Quran and hadith, and the lives of Khulafa 'ar-Rashidin and he was a good author."
• Imam Al-Shafi died on 29 Rajab 204H/820M years in Egypt at the age of 54 (AH).
He left behind to the Muslim world one of the greatest books in *Usul Fiqh* titled *Al-Risalah*. This book is the first book explaining the rules in abstracting laws from the Qur'an and the Sunnah.
• Besides that, Imam al-Shafie also left the famous book of fiqh entitled *al-Umm*. 
The teachings of Imam al-Shafie was continued by some of his students such as Abu al-Buwayti Yaaqub (231H/846M), Rabi 'bin Sulaiman al-Marali (270H/884M) and Abu Ibrahim bin Yahya al-Muzani (274H/888M).
• The earnestness and seriousness of the past scholars in their studies regardless of age, geographical distance and provision.
They would spend millions of dollars in the pursuit of knowledge. Especially the science of hadith.
• The scholars said, "If you learn hadith, you will end up being a bankrupt" for the high cost of probing the entire book of hadith and their narrators.
• The perseverance spirit was possessed by scholars of the past generation.
• In contrast to the modern generation, who are provided with the ease of transport and better facilities such as computer, writing tools, books and papers.
• It must be noted that at the time of the past generation, not only it was very difficult to obtain a typewriter, even pens and papers are rare to find.
• It is reported that because of his poverty, Imam Shafie recorded his knowledge on pieces of trashed bone which he found.
• Dear brothers,
• In the 8th to 12th century, Muslims were very progressive. They were the authority in knowledge, science and technology. The dark ages of the west was the glorious time for the Islamic Civilization.
• Islamic Civilization at the time used to attract people in the West who seek knowledge and expertise in the Islamic states. They returned and spread the knowledge in their homeland.
• This was acknowledged by western scholars. Among the sciences that they studied and gained from the Islamic education centre were mathematics, philosophy, medical etc.
• This knowledge was spread to the universities in the west in Italy, France, Britain and Germany.
The glorious Islamic ways of spreading knowledge and its contribution to world civilization can be seen in the statement made by Herbert A. Davies;
• “They (the Muslims) built large universities over a few centuries more than that owned by the European Christians.”
• Large libraries was built, some of them housed hundreds of thousands volume of books that were registered and perfectly arranged.”
• Great numbers of Christians who studied in the University of Cordova brought back the knowledge and civilization to their country.
• The influence of the University in Islamic Spain over the universities in Paris, Oxford and other universities in Italy was certainly great.”
Thus, we must understand the meaning of a university. Prof. Dr. Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas (1998) stated:
• “A university is not just about buildings, or the outer look. Verily, in any history of the world, lecturers and teachers including the students are the main components in the existence of the university.”
• Today’s nation is being developed by the culture of knowledge that is widely disseminated in a society.
• A society itself is being shaped by the molds of their leaders who gain higher education. Thus a university has contributed towards preparing the future of the next generations.
• Dear fellow brothers and graduates.
• Remember that your success are from the sacrifices of people around you, among them are your parents who sacrificed financially, their feelings, their prayers for the blessings from Allah and working hard to earn income for your studies as undergraduates here.
• The same goes to the sacrifices from your siblings, uncles and aunties, grandparents and lecturers.
• Repay their sacrifices by making ‘iman’ as a foundation in life, knowledge as a guiding torch, good character as ornament and lastly the obedience to Allah as the fortress in life.
Repay their sacrifices by making ‘iman’ as a foundation in life, knowledge as a guiding torch, good character as ornament and lastly the obedience to Allah as the fortress in life.
• Do not taint the sacrifice of the love ones by negligence and laziness, egotism and luxury as well as wrongdoings and sins.
• In commemoration of UTM’s Orientation Week, I would like to say a few words to all the honorable lecturers of UTM.
• To all the honorable educators, may Allah award you with strong determination, dignity to work and share ideas, full hearted efforts to break the darkness and ignorance that surrounded the hearts and minds, so as to lighten it with the torch of knowledge and good deeds for all the undergraduates.
• O Allah, Grant our educators sincerity and perseverance and increase their strength and honorable status as superior scholars in this blessed country.
• Make the process of education at UTM as charity for them that will last until the hereafter.
• To those undergraduates during this orientation week in the university, make the success of your friends as your motivation, their experience as a lesson, their advice as guidance.
• Stand up to be an excellent person, worldly or religiously.
• Take care of your manners and morals as the seeker of knowledge. Instill in you the love of knowledge gatherings.
• Tabulate in your diaries to seek knowledge especially the fardhu ain through the Tafaqquh classes, Maghrib lectures, talks, forums, discussions as well as your major studies in UTM.
• Take advantage of your time in this Garden of Knowledge through beneficial things.
• Remember, millions of Muslims are waiting and hoping for your success as you are ambassadors of the Islamic nation.
• Keep your five daily prayers in places where the Azan is being called, safeguard your aurat, avoid adultery and disobedience, leave useless things, honor the lecturers, respect the elders, do not skip class, prioritize knowledge above other activities, attend religious lectures and be steadfast with good deeds.
• Lukmanul Hakim advice to his son in seeking of knowledge:

• “O my son, sit with the scholars, sit close with your knees with them, because Allah will lighten the hearts with the light of wisdom as Allah brought life to a dry land with rain pouring from the sky.”
Abdullah Bin Ahmad Bin Hanbal said:

"I asked my father rahimahullah about the pursuit of knowledge. Should he learn from a scholar with vast knowledge or travel into several areas and learn from other scholars?"
He said, "He should travel. Learn from the scholars of Kufa, Bashrah, Mecca, Medina and hear from them."
• Dear brothers,
• Indeed, the time between the two sermons are effective time for du’a.
• Let us together pray that Allah bestowed us in the increment of our faith and piety, distanced UTM, its citizens and residents surrounding it, from any calamity and from any undesirable incidents.
بارَكَ اللهُ لِي وَلَكُمْ فِي الْقُرْءَانِ العَظِيمِ، وَنَفَعَّلِي وَإِيَّاكُمْ بِمَا فِي هَِمِّ الدِّينِ وَالْآيَاتِ وَالذِّكْرِ الحَكِيمِ، وَتَقَبَّلْ مِنْي وَمِنْكُمْ تَلَائُمَةً إِنَّهُ هُوَ السَّمِيعُ العَلِيمُ. أَقُولُ قَوْلِي هَذَا وَأَسْتَغْفِرُ اللَّهَ العَظِيمِ لِي وَلَكُمْ، وَلِسَائِرِ المُسْلِمِينَ وَالمُسْلِمَاتِ، وَالمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالمُؤْمِنَاتِ، فَاِسْتَغْفِرُوهُمْ فَيَا فَوْزُ المُسْتَغْفِرِيْنَ وَيَا نَجَاةُالْمَتَّائِيْنَ.