

Ten ways to maximize your time in the library

From an Islamic perspective

By Imam Vasi (Muslim Chaplain, UCLan)

Below are ‘meanings’ from ten narrations of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), which will benefit my dear students who spend much of their time studying in the library. Yes, it does get frustrating, especially during exams, but it is important we abide by the rules and regulations of the University and not disturb people around us. In the books of narrations, it is mentioned that when a person takes advice from others, he or she is actually the fortunate one. I have hope that you will consider these 10 valuable advices and help create a good learning environment in the library.

1. Keeping silent saves oneself from trouble (Sunan At-Tirmidhi)

Islam always encourages silence. This is the secret to success. Especially in the library, it is more important to respect the privacy of other people. Libraries are places where silence is vital. Students leave their homes to come to the library and work in peace. They stay awake and strive hard to gain good grades so that they can achieve the best future. Do not be amongst those who fail and repeat the year again!

2. Bringing out best manners is a sign of a perfect believer (Sunan At-Tirmidhi)

Islam inspires good character, regardless of faith, race or gender. A person can be praying Salaah, fast, etc. but until he or she does not instill the beautiful characteristics of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) in their hearts, they will never be a complete Muslim.

3. Showing mercy for mankind will invite mercy from the Creator (Saheeh Al Bukhari)

Every human has the quality of ‘Rahm’ (mercy) in his or her heart. It is a hidden treasure that needs to be brought out from one’s inner self. The sense of pride and ego must disappear in order for the quality of Rahm to set in. Even the animals of the earth show mercy upon their siblings. Humans are of a greater rank. In one narration, there is glad tidings of mercy being showered from the one above, i.e. the Lord, upon the individual who shows mercy on those who are below, i.e. the earth.

4. Be the one who is most beneficial to people if you want to become the best amongst them. (Musnad Ahmad)

Students of knowledge are like siblings. Just as siblings care for one another, students should also care for one another and respect each other’s rights. Even as Muslims, we are encouraged to benefit humanity as much as possible regardless of background, ethnicity or culture. This has been highlighted by our Prophet Muhammad (PBUH).

5. Good character should be implemented when dealing with all kinds of people (Sunan At-Tirmidhi)

As mentioned earlier, manners increase love for one another and brings happiness in the Lord for caring about His creation. Every human being is unique so his or her characteristics are also different. The best person is the one with good manners. Be a student of love, mutual respect and kindness. Show compassion to those around you. If they are causing you problem with their noise then deal with them politely, reminding them of these Narrations.

6. A person will be deprived of all goodness if gentleness is not exercised (Saheeh Muslim)

All the goodness in a human being is found in gentleness. When a person faces an angry being, he or she calms the tension by being gentle and kind. In one narration, it is mentioned that doing wudhu also calms tension. Angry people begin to calm their nerves as they respond to a gentle conversation. Do not deprive yourself from goodness because of a harsh attitude.

7. Leave those things aside that are useless and of no concern. This is the beauty of a person's Islam (Sunan At-Tirmidhi)

Wasting time in futile talks and activities is foolishness. Islam encourages one to utilize every moment of their life wisely. Each second of a person's life is precious. It does not return. Make sure to use the time you get for revision and avoid all pointless discussions in the library. Do not leave your assignments until the last day!

8. Never betray anyone who tries to betray you. Always fulfil the trust of those who put trust in you (Sunan Abu Dawood)

The library card that a student uses is an 'amaanah' (trust). As Muslims, it is necessary to fulfil the trust given to you. This means following the rules of the department you are in. In the case of the library, the trust is to fulfil the rights of others in the library and to use the resources available carefully. Remaining silent and letting others work is a trust that needs to be fulfilled, as is ensuring books and other material is not damaged.

9. Do not go around disturbing two people who are working or talking, and always take their permission before you enter (Sunan Abu Dawood)

There are two aspects to this hadeeth. One is not to disturb two people who are talking to each other or getting on with their work. Otherwise, you will not only waste your time but also the valuable time of others who are trying to make the most of their study time. In many cases when there are more people sitting together the noise gets louder and jokes are shared resulting in laughter and shouting.

The other aspect to the hadeeth is that when a person disturbs two people, he may overhear their private conversation. This is not allowed in Islam as the person is breaching privacy issues.

10. Direct others towards goodness. You will receive the same reward as them (Sunan At-Tirmidhi)

This means that if you can also help share this message and even change the character of one person, then you are also included in the reward. Imagine an environment of peace and harmony all around the UCLan library. May the Almighty grant us the ability to fulfil the rights of others. Ameen.

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