115830 - Advice to someone who has a stammer and wants to seek knowledge and teach it to people

the question

I have had a stammer for most of my life. I am going to study the Quran and I want to ask: if I seek knowledge, I want to spread it, but there is only one thing that is stopping me. Will my stammer mean that I will keep my knowledge for myself only?

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

We ask Allah, may He be exalted, to decree healing and reward for you, healing from this problem with which Allah is testing you and reward for attaining knowledge and for your intention to spread it among people.

This stammer with which Allah is testing you is a problem that requires patience in order to rid yourself of it, and training to teach the tongue to pronounce words steadily and out loud, with confidence. But before all of that you should seek the help of Allah, may He be exalted. It has to do with your psychology and sometimes, in some people, it has to do with a physical problem. We advise you to consult specialists in speech therapy and diseases of the jaw and tongue.

In al-Mawsoo'ah al-'Arabiyyah al-'Aalamiyyah it says:

There are a number of ways in which those who have a stammer can attain perfect fluency. These ways include: reading out loud with others, talking in supportive environments, or talking with friends. End quote.

Whatever the case:

You should understand that you will be rewarded for attaining knowledge, and the difficulty that you suffer in attaining it will increase you in reward.

It was narrated that ‘Aa’ishah said: The Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: “The one who is skilled in reciting Qur’an will be with the noble, obedient scribes and the one who recites Qur’an and falters therein, and finds it difficult, will have a double reward.”

Narrated by Muslim (798)

Imam al-Qurtubi (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

Faltering refers to stumbling and having difficulty in speech. He will have a double reward, because of his recitation and because of the difficulty he encounters.

Tafseer al-Qurtubi (1/30).

If you want to benefit others with what you learn of knowledge, then you have two options:

1.

You can benefit people with your writings, in which case it is not essential that the one who seeks to benefit others should be able to pronounce the letters well. There are leading scholars of Islam from among the early generations of whose knowledge nothing has reached us except their books; we have not heard a single letter from them. Some of the contemporary scholars and callers decided to refrain from addressing people directly – which does not necessarily mean that they cannot express themselves well – and they focus their efforts on benefitting others by their pens and writing very useful books. There is a great deal of room for writing in newspapers, magazines, websites and other options.

2.

You can make your resolve firm and face reality head-on by meeting people face-to-face and teaching them verbally. Some of the imams and other scholars also had a stammer, but when they ascended the minbar and spoke to people, they would speak fluently and with ease, and there would be no stumbling over even a single letter. One of these scholars was Shaykh ‘Abd ar-Rahman ad-Dawsari (may Allah have mercy on him), and there are other famous scholars. This

was their situation; the stammer did not prevent them from being eloquent khateebs, and in some cases they combined that with brilliant writing.

There is another example, a virtuous sister who studied sharee‘ah until she obtained her PhD in that field. Read what she herself says:

When I looked at my peers and colleagues in the department, I found that some of them were able to brush off the dust of the Shaytaan – namely blameworthy shyness when calling people to Allah – and why could I not do that too? Why could I not instil in myself trust in Allah? So I decided to begin straightaway in the prayer room of the university. My specialisation in da‘wah had given me particular insight into the scheming of our enemies, and their ongoing war against Islam, so how long would we have to wait to respond? I thought about a way to treat my stammer, which was by not speaking quickly and – in the beginning – not looking at the audience; rather I would look around the room so that I would not feel nervous. Any letter that I could not pronounce easily, I would change it to another letter that was easier for me.

By the grace of Allah, I began to give lessons in the prayer room of the University, but without supervision from any of the female professors. Obviously, supervision of the female professors may give strength and support to the one who wants to call people to Allah, and make her more precise and correct in what she is discussing and teaching, so that it will not be mere expressions of emotion.

End quote.

We also give you the glad tidings that one of the people we know who are active in seeking and spreading knowledge also has a stammer; even though he cannot rid himself of it, his classes and lectures have benefitted many seekers of knowledge. Giving classes is different from preaching, and it is possible to benefit seekers of knowledge and teach them many books, even before ridding oneself of this problem. So go ahead with that to which Allah has opened your heart of seeking beneficial knowledge, and remember that if you are sincere towards Allah, may He be exalted, in your intention to seek and spread knowledge, then you will be rewarded whatever the

case, whether you are able to actually spread knowledge and teach, or something prevents you from doing that.

We ask Allah to make your affairs easy for you and to enable you to do that which pleases Him.

For information on the virtues of seeking knowledge and of the scholars, please see the answer to question no. 10471.

And Allah knows best.