14082 - Important books for the seeker of Islamic knowledge

the question

We would like some advice about the books which the seeker of Islamic knowledge should obtain, study and refer to.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

1 – ‘Aqeedah (basic tenets of faith):

1- Thalaathat al-Usool

2- Al-Qawaa’id al-Arba’ah

3- Kashf al-Shubahaat

4- Al-Tawheed

These four books were written by Shaykh al-Islam Imaam Muhammad ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhaab (may Allah have mercy on him).

5- Al-‘Aqeedah al-Waasitiyyah which deals with Tawheed al-Asmaa’ wa’l-Sifaat (The Oneness of the Divine names and attributes). This is one of the best books written on this topic, and it is worth reading and studying.

6- Al-Hamawiyyah

7- Al-Tadmuriyyah

These two books are more comprehensive than al-Waasitiyyah. These three books were written by

Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah.

8- Al-‘Aqeedah al-Tahhaawiyyah, by Shaykh Abu Ja’far Ahmad ibn Muhammad al-Tahhaawi

9- Sharh al-‘Aqeedah al-Tahhaawiyyah by Abu’l-Hasan ‘Ali ibn Abi’l-‘Izz

10-Al-Durar al-Saniyyah fi’l-Ajoobah al-Najdiyyah, compiled by Shaykh ‘Abd al-Rahmaan ibn Qaasim (may Allah have mercy on him)

11-Al-Durrah al-Madiyyah fi ‘Aqeedah al-Firqah al-Mardiyyah by Muhammad ibn Ahmad al-Safaareeni al-Hanbali.

This book contains some general statements which go against the madhhab of the salaf, such as his saying, “Our Lord is not an essence or an attribute or a physical entity, exalted be He.”

Therefore the seeker of knowledge has to study it with a shaykh who is well versed in the ‘aqeedah of the salaf, so that he can explain the general statements in it that go against the ‘aqeedah of the righteous salaf.

2 – Hadeeth

1- Fath al-Baari Sharh Saheeh al-Bukhaari, by Ibn Hajar al-‘Asqallaani (may Allah have mercy on him).

2- Subul al-Salaam Sharh Buloogh al-Maraam, by al-San’aani, and his book Jaami’ bayna al-Hadeeth wa’l-Fiqh

3- Nayl al-Awtaar Sharh Muntaqaa al-Akhbaar by al-Shawkaani

4- ‘Umdat al-Ahkaam by al-Maqdisi. This is an abridged book; most of its ahaadeeth are narrated in al-Saheehayn so their authenticity does not need to be researched.

5- Al-Arba’een al-Nawawiyyah, by Abu Zakariyya al-Nawawi (may Allah have mercy on him). This is a good book because it includes etiquette and a good methodology, and important basic

principles, such as the hadeeth, “Part of a person’s being a good Muslim is his leaving alone that which does not concern him.”

(Narrated by Imaam Ahmad, 1 – 201; al-Tirmidhi, 2318; classed as hasan by al-Nawawi in Riyaadh al-Saaliheen, 73; classed as saheeh by Ahmad Shaakir in al-Musnad, 1737)

This principle – if one made it the path upon which one walks – would be sufficient. Another principle is given concerning when one should speak, “Whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day, let him say something good or else remain silent.” (Narrated by al-Bukhaari, Kitaab al-Adab; Muslim, Kitaab al-Luqtah, Baab al-Diyaafah).

6- Buloogh al-Maraam, by al-Haafiz Ibn Hajar al-‘Asqallaani. This is a very useful book, especially because it mentions the narrators, and quoted the opinions of others scholars, who said whose hadeeth is saheeh and whose is da’eef, and he comments on the hadeeth to say whether they are saheeh or da’eef.

7- Nukhbat al-Fikr by al-Haafiz Ibn Hajar al-‘Asqallaani. This is considered to be a comprehensive work. If the seeker of knowledge understands it completely then he will have no need of many other books of mustalah (the science of hadeeth). Ibn Hajar (may Allah have mercy on him) has a useful way of writing, which involves examining every issue in depth and categorizing the topics he discusses. If the seeker of knowledge reads it he will find it stimulating, because it is based on making one think. I say: it is good for the seeker of knowledge to memorize it because it is a useful summary of the science of mustalah (science of hadeeth).

8- The Six Books (Saheeh al-Bukhaari, Muslim, al-Nasaa’i, Abu Dawood, Ibn Maajah and al-Tirmidhi). I advise the seeker of knowledge to read them often, because that will serve two purposes: reviewing the main sources of Islam and reviewing the names of hadeeth narrators. If you often review the names of hadeeth narrators, then whenever you come across the name of one of the narrators of al-Bukhaari in any isnaad, you will know that this is one of the narrators of al-Bukhaari, so you will benefit from this knowledge of hadeeth.

3 – Books of fiqh:

1- Aadaab al-mashiy ila'l-Salaah by Shaykh al-Islam Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhaab (may Allah have mercy on him)

2- Zaad al-Mustaqni' fi Ikhtisaar al-Muqni' by al-Hajjaawi. This is one of the best texts of fiqh. It is a blessed book, brief and comprehensive. Our shaykh, 'Abd al-Rahmaan al-Sa'di (may Allah have mercy on him) told us to memorize it, even though he had memorized the text of Daleel al-Taalib.

3- Al-Rawd al-Murbi' Sharh Zaad al-Mustaqni' by Shaykh Mansoor al-Bahooti

4- 'Umdat al-Fiqh by Ibn Qudaamah (may Allah have mercy on him)

5- al-Usool min 'Ilm al-Usool. This is an abridged book which serves as an introduction for the seeker of knowledge.

4 – Faraa'id (laws of inheritance)

1- Matn al-Rahbiyyah by al-Rahbi

2- Matn al-Burhaaniyyah by Muhammad al-Burhaani. This is a useful and comprehensive abridged book dealing with all the laws of inheritance. I think that al-Burhaaniyyah is more comprehensive than al-Rahbiyyah in some ways, and it gives more information.

5 – Tafseer

1- Tafseer al-Quran al-'Azeem by Ibn Katheer (may Allah have mercy on him). This book is good for tafseer based on reports and it is useful and trustworthy. But it does not pay much attention to matters of grammar and style.

2- Tayseer al-Kareem al-Rahmaan fi Tafseer Kalaam al-Mannaan by Shaykh 'Abd al-Rahmaan al-Sa'di (may Allah have mercy on him). This is a good, easy and trustworthy book, and I recommend it.

3- Muqaddimah Shaykh al-Islam fi'l-Tafseer. This is an important introduction.

4- Adwaa’ al-Bayaan by al-‘Allaamah Muhammad al-Shanqeeti (may Allah have mercy on him). This is a comprehensive book covering hadeeth, fiqh, tafseer and usool al-fiqh.

6 – General books on some subjects:

1- On (Arabic) grammar: Matn al-Ajroomiyyah. This is an abridged book.

2- Also on Arabic grammar: Alfiyyah Ibn Maalik; this is a summary of the science of grammar.

3- On Seerah (Prophet’s biography): The best book that I have seen is Zaad al-Ma’aad by Ibn al-Qayyim (may Allah have mercy on him). This is a very useful book in which he mentions the biography of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) from all Angles, then he discusses many rulings.

4- Rawdat al-‘Uqalaa’ by Ibn Hibbaan al-Busti (may Allah have mercy on him). This is a useful book despite its brevity. He compiled a large amount of useful material and stories of the scholars, muhadditheen and others.

5- Siyar A’laam al-Nubalaa’ by al-Dhahabi. This book is very useful and the seeker of knowledge should read and refer to it.