349464 - She is a seeker of knowledge and is not sure whether she should seek knowledge or teach people, and she is asking for advice

the question

I am twenty years old and a seeker of knowledge; I have memorized the Book of Allah, may He be exalted. Two years ago, I moved from Riyadh to al-Karak. I was very upset by what I saw of ignorance and failure to refer to sharee'ah for judgement. I became very withdrawn and focused on seeking Islamic knowledge. Many of my teachers and friends in Riyadh criticized me for isolating myself, and they are encouraging me to go out and teach people and mix with them, as they say that I have the ability to convey the message effectively. But I am afraid of taking a position as a teacher at too early a stage, because I only have a little knowledge, and there is no one here who could supervise and advise me, and correct me if I make mistakes. I am afraid that the society here will influence me and I will not be steadfast, and I am very worried that the Shaytaan may mislead me and cause me to speak about Allah without knowledge, or make me feel self-admiration and show off. Please give me your advice.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

If the Muslim has an opportunity to guide people to what is good and teach them that which Allah, may He be exalted, has taught him, then he should not miss the opportunity due to psychological barriers, and he should not let waswaas (whispers from the Shaytaan, intrusive thoughts) prevent him from doing good. He should not regard teaching and guiding people as being a social status that he fears could cause him to drift away, and he should not regard teaching people as something very complicated and be discouraged for fear of problems and obstacles. Rather he should regard teaching people what is good as an obligation and something required by Islam. The one who has knowledge should not shy away from teaching one who is ignorant.

This is one of the Islamic obligations that the Muslim should do according to his ability, for Allah does not burden anyone with more than he can bear. So the Muslim should teach others what he knows, and regarding that which he does not know, he should say: Allah knows best.

The one who has memorized the book of Allah, may He be exalted, may help others to memorize it; the one who is studying fiqh, if he has not yet studied all the topics of fiqh, and has only studied issues having to do with acts of worship, may teach topics having to do with acts of worship, and not other issues. This is what the companions of the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) did.

It was narrated from ‘Abdullah ibn ‘Amr (may Allah be pleased with him) that the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: “Narrate from me, even if it is one verse, and narrate from the Children of Israel, no problem, but whoever tells a lie about me deliberately, let him take his place in Hell.” Narrated by al-Bukhaari (3461).

It was narrated from Maalik ibn al-Huwayrith: I came to the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) with a group of my people, and we stayed with him for twenty days. He was compassionate and kind, and when he realized that we missed our families, he said: “Go back and be with them, and teach them. Pray, and when the time for prayer comes, let one of you give the adhaan and let the oldest of you lead you in prayer.” Narrated by al-Bukhaari (628) and Muslim (674).

Education and teaching are a great means of attaining reward, so the seeker of knowledge should not delay that until tomorrow if he is able to do it today, for obstacles may come in his way and he may miss out on what Allah has promised of great reward for the one who teaches the people about what is good.

It was narrated from Abu Huaryrah (may Allah be pleased with him) that the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: “Whoever calls people to guidance will have a reward like that of those who follow him, without that detracting from their reward in the slightest…” Narrated by Muslim (2674).

It was narrated from Abu Hurayrah that the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: “When a person dies, his good deeds come to an end except three: ongoing charity, beneficial knowledge, or a righteous son who will offer supplication for him.” Narrated by Muslim (1631).

Shaykh ‘Abd al-‘Azeez ibn Baaz (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

The seeker of knowledge combines several things, knowledge and calling people to Islam, doing good deeds, reconciling between people and offering sincere advice. So he should not stop at any limit; rather he should strive as much as he is able, in a way that will not distract him from his obligatory duties. Thus he is a seeker of knowledge, he is one who calls people to Allah, he is one who offers sincere advice, he is a teacher and he is one who reconciles between people, so he will have a good impact. The seeker of knowledge, especially one who is a student in the faculty of sharee‘ah and the faculty of usool ad-deen, or one who attends the study circles of the shaykhs, must have high aspirations. So he should not limit himself to one thing only and exclude others; rather he should strive hard in doing all that is good, according to his knowledge and ability. Thus he will be one of those who strive to reconcile between people, and one of those who call people to Allah, and one of those who teach people, and one of those who offer sincere advice, and one of those who enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong. This is how the Sahaabah and those who followed them in truth were; they would be part of everything that is of benefit to people, and they would not hesitate to do anything that could benefit people.

End quote from *Majmoo‘ Fataawa wa Maqaalaat ash-Shaykh ‘Abd al-‘Azeez ibn Baaz* (24/24).

For more information, please see the answer to question no. 103895 .

And Allah knows best.