

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

The Story of the Imaam of Arabic Imaam Al'Kisaa'ee & the Importance of Learning Arabic

Taken From Various Sources & Translated by Taalib Tyson

Someone said to Imaam Al'Kisaa'ee “Learn the Arabic language”, so because of this he became an imaam in Arabic.

When Imaam Al'Kisaa'ee began in his search and quest for knowledge he began to study Arabic, no sooner did he start had he give up its pursuit due to becoming difficult for him!

Some time had passed and in his depth of despair (due to the Arabic language being hard for him), he was sitting down when he noticed a ant crawling up the wall with food on its back, so as he watching this ant he noticed that the ant was finding it hard carry this bit of food on its back but, every time it went forward a step or two the weight of the food on its back pulled it back a step or two, but it continued forward more steps each time until it was able to completely climb the wall.

Upon seeing this Al'Kisaa'ee was so astonished he said to himself “If this ant could find such a hard task so easy, due to it persisting in it climbing the wall and not giving up, then how should my attitude be towards the Arabic language!”

If such is the case of this Creature of Allah the Exalted, then I should adopt the same attitude and not give up in my goals. This gave him such great motivation that Al'Kisaa'ee become a master of Arabic and a great teacher of Arabic grammar.

He was and known in history among the grammarians to be a flag-bearer and Imaam in Arabic. *Taken from Shaykh Ibn Uthaymeen's book Al'Qole lul Mufeed Ala Kitaabil Tawheed p605 Daarul Jowziyah*

This story is so great, it should encourage you as it did me to learn the Arabic language and to not be put off by small or even big hurdles for indeed Arabic increases honour as was said by Umar Ibn Khuttaab, when he said:

“Learn Arabic, for indeed it increases Honour.” *Taken from The Etiquettes Of Seeking Knowledge by Bakr Abu Zayd p89*

So may Allah have mercy upon you, Arabic and Arabic grammar should be what we are in great search of like the poet said in his poetry:

“Arabic grammar straightens the tongue that specks ungrammatical language and you, honour the person if he does not make grammatical errors. If you seek the greatest knowledge, then the greatest of it is that which straightens the tongue. *Taken from The Etiquettes Of Seeking*

Knowledge by Bakr Abu Zayd p90

So do not lose hope and strive harder in learning Arabic and take Al'Kisaa'ee's story as an encouragement to encourage you.

Imaam Ash'Shaafi said regarding learning Arabic:

“To become a true follower of Prophet Muhammed one has to learn the language He spoke, which is Arabic.” *Taken from Al'Risaala p91*

Praise be to Allah, may Allah have mercy upon our Ulama (Scholar), some of them have even said learning Arabic is a must, of them is Imaam Ash'Shaafi who said:

“It is obligatory upon every Muslim to learn Arabic to the utmost of his power.” *Taken from Al'Risaala p93*

Also the Shaykh ul-Islaam Ibn Taymiyah said, “Learning Arabic language is Waajib (an obligation)! Why, because learning Quraan and Sunnah is Waajib and whatever leads to the fulfillment of a Waajib is in itself is Waajib, so learning Arabic is Waajib.” This is a Fiqh principle Ibn Taymiyah is using for further reference see Ibn Uthaymeen's Sharh Nath'mul Waraaqat. *Taken from Majmoo Fatawaa of Ibn Taymiyah*

Even thou I don't hold that learning Arabic is Waajib the fact that our Ulama have said it is Waajib goes to show how some of them think and held Arabic in high esteem.

Imaam Ash'Shaatabi (d.790 A.H) also said about Arabic:

“Whoever desire to understand the Quraan, then it will be understood by the language of the Arabs, and there is no others way than this.” *Az'Zarkashi v2 p160*

So this shows us that the Salaf (may Allah have mercy upon them) held the Arabic in high esteem and to further add to what I am saying, read this statement of Mujaahid (d. 103 A.H):

“It is impermissible for anyone who believes in Allah and the Last Day to speak about the Quraan if he or she does not know Arabic.” *Az'Zarkashi v1 p293*

Also Imaam Maalik is even reported to punish a person if he or she interpreted the Quraan and they never knew the Arabic language, he said;

“If any person is brought to me, having interpreted the Quraan while he was ignorant of the Arabic language, I will make an example of him (by punishing him).” *Az'Zarkashi v2 p160*

All praise be to Allah the Lord of the worlds.

The Prophet ﷺ said:

“Make things easy and do not make things difficult. Give glad tidings and do not repel people..”

[متفق عليه]