

114878 - Hadeeth on Encouragement to Read

the question

How sound is the following hadeeth: "A man reading is handsome in the sight of God; so learn to read and when you have learnt, teach".

Detailed answer

Perhaps the hadeeth referred to in the question is that which was narrated by 'Uthman ibn 'Affan (may Allah be pleased with him), and says that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: "The best of you is the one who learns the Quran and teaches it." Narrated by al-Bukhari (5027).

There is a great deal of encouragement to learn to read the Quran, both in the Quran and the Sunnah. There is also encouragement to learn how to read. The Holy Quran is the only book that the Muslims read at the beginning of Islam, so learning to read and write started with learning the Holy Quran. Indeed the command to learn to read came with the first word of the Revelation that came to the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), when Allah said (interpretation of the meaning):

"Read! In the Name of your Lord Who has created (all that exists).

He has created man from a clot (a piece of thick coagulated blood).

Read! And your Lord is the Most Generous.

Who has taught (the writing) by the pen.

He has taught man that which he knew not."

[al-'Alaq 96:1-5]

Knowledge spread and ignorance decreased as the result of learning to read and write the Quran and understand its meanings.

But if what is meant is another hadeeth in which it says that Allah loves those who learn to read in general, then we could not find this wording in any of the books of Sunnah.

And Allah knows best.