

ARTICLE

Knowledge of Deen

Learning Deen

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The Prophet (pbuh) emphasized Muslims to educate themselves. He said: **طلبة العلم فريضة على كل مسلم** – Seeking knowledge is obligatory on every Muslim

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I. KNOWLEDGE OF DEEN

Opening Statement

إن الحمد لله نحمده ونستعينه ونستغفره ونتوكله إليه ، ونعوز بالله من شرور أنفسنا و سيئات أعمالنا ، من يهده الله فلا مضل له و من يضل فلا هادي له ،
 - وأشهد أن لا إله إلا الله وحده لا شريك له ، وأشهد أن محمد عبده و رسوله ،
 Indeed all praises are due to Allah, we praise Him, we seek His help, we ask for His forgiveness, and we rely solely on Him. We seek His refuge from the evil in our souls and from our wicked deeds. Whoever Allah guides, no one can misguide. And whomever Allah misguides, no one can guide. I bear witness that there is no one worthy of worship except Allah, He is One, with no partners, and I testify that Mohammad (pbuh)¹ is His Messenger and His slave.

و صلي الله على سيدنا محمد و على آله و أصحابه و سلم - أما بعد :

Difference between Islam and Kufr

Islam is is first “ علم ” knowledge then “ إيمان ” faith in it. The real difference between believer and non believer is “Elm” علم - knowledge. Thus, Allah (swt) said:

قُلْ هَلْ يَسْتَوِي الَّذِينَ يَعْلَمُونَ وَالَّذِينَ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ

39:9 ... Say, "Are those who know equal to those who do not know?" ...

Muslim is not a Muslim just because he was born with Muslim name, but because Muslim is one who has acquired “Elm” knowledge of Allah’s Deen (and follow it).

How can one follow guidance of Muhammad when he does not even know what Muhammad said?.. Allah (swt) said: قُلْ هَلْ يَسْتَوِي الْأَعْمَىٰ وَالْبَصِيرُ أَفَلَا تَتَفَكَّرُونَ 6:50 “Say, "Is the blind equivalent to the seeing? Then will you not give thought”.

Muslim is really the person who knows the system of Islam, its teachings, its tenants, his role and his responsibilities, his obligations, and then only by knowing and understanding it, he submits to it, and he leads his life according to this teachings.

This was the real mission of all Prophets and Prophet Mohammad (pbuh):

كَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا فِيكُمْ رَسُولًا مِّنكُمْ يَتْلُو عَلَيْكُمْ آيَاتِنَا وَيُزَكِّيكُمْ وَيُعَلِّمُكُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَيُعَلِّمُكُم مَّا لَمْ تَكُونُوا تَعْلَمُونَ

2:151 “Just as We have sent among you a messenger from yourselves reciting to you Our verses and purifying you and teaching you the Book and wisdom and teaching you that which you did not know”.

When a person does not even know what the difference between Kufr and Islam is, and what the difference between Tawheed and Shirk is, then how can he distinguish between what is right (truth - Haq) and what is wrong (false - Batil)? How can he distinguish what came as command from Allah or what was the vain desire of corrupt people.

Thus, Allah (swt) said:

¹ (pbuh) is commonly used abbreviation for peace and blessings of Allah be upon him.

ثُمَّ جَعَلْنَاكَ عَلَىٰ شَرِيحَةٍ مِّنَ الْأَمْرِ فَاتَّبِعْهَا وَلَا تَتَّبِعْ أَهْوَاءَ الَّذِينَ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ

45:18 Then We put you, [O Muhammad], on an ordained way concerning the matter [of religion]; so follow it and do not follow the inclinations of those who do not know.

Thus, we established that Islam and ignorance cannot co-exist. One cannot claim to have practiced Islam without having prior knowledge of it.

Learning Islam

It is then obligatory on every Muslim to know what his Deen is all about, what does Quran speaks to, what are the teaching of our beloved Prophet (pbuh), what is kufr and what is haq. What makes obedience to Allah and what makes Allah (swt) angry and displeased.

شَهِدَ اللَّهُ أَنَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ وَالْمَلَائِكَةُ وَأُولُو الْعِلْمِ قَائِمًا بِالْقِسْطِ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ

3:18 Allah witnesses that there is no deity except Him, and [so do] the angels and those of knowledge - [that He is] maintaining [creation] in justice. There is no deity except Him, the Exalted in Might, the Wise

Here Allah (swt) first bears witness himself, then the noble angels, and then mentioned the people with knowledge². This verse is the evidence for significance and high status of *أُولُو الْعِلْمِ* in Quran.

The Prophet (pbuh) emphasized Muslims to educate themselves. He said: *طلبة العلم فريضة على كل مسلم* – Seeking knowledge is obligatory on every Muslim.

The biggest threat Islam has is from within itself. The threat of ignorance, the threat of not knowing what has been revealed in Quran, the threat of not knowing what the Prophet (pbuh) explained to us. The Prophet (pbuh) has reportedly said:

من يرد الله به خيرا يفقهه في الدين

² Abu Hamid Al-Gazali (Summeryzed from Ahya Uloomuddin): The superior Knowledge (علم) is the one that by acquiring it person get closer to Allah (swt). Hence, Knowledge (علم) is of two types:

- a) Shara'i Sciences - شرعى علوم (knowledge of Deen of Allah)
- b) Non-Shara'i Sciences- غير شرعى علوم (that are not from the Allah and His Prophet)

The non-Shara'i knowledge can be further categorized into three:

- i) Knowledge that is necessary and recommended. These are related to betterment of worldly life, such as scientific or mathematical. Some of these are considered to be mandatory to be acquired within a community (فرض كفايه) and others are not mandatory.
- ii) Knowledge that is disliked and non-sharia compliant. Those that involve deception, cheating, fraud or mislead. E.g. magic, illusions etc. (And also those that create fitna and results in destruction and killing of mankind, and sway man away from "fitra" on which he was created - author).
- iii) Knowledge that is permissible (مباح): e.g. poetry (if its decent non corrupt), history etc.

Sharia Sciences (شرعى علوم) are all considered فرض كفايه. These include four fundamentals a) Quran, b) life and traditions of Prophet, c) Ijma (consensus) of Muslim Scholars, d) life and traditions of Companions of Prophet. These four fundamentals drive various sub sciences, e.g. science of fiqh, sciences of quran, (like qirat, exegesis, nasikh-wa-mansook, general and particular), science of hadith (like principles of hadith, Asma-wa-rijal), science of Arabic language and grammar, science

Whoever Allah wants to do good, He gives him knowledge of His Deen. (Al-Bukhari and al-Muslim).

Allah (swt) said:

فَمَنْ يُرِدِ اللَّهُ أَنْ يَهْدِيَهُ يَشْرَحْ صَدْرَهُ لِلْإِسْلَامِ وَمَنْ يُرِدْ أَنْ يُضِلَّهُ يَجْعَلْ صَدْرَهُ ضَيِّقًا حَرَجًا كَأَنَّمَا يَصْعَدُ فِي السَّمَاءِ
كَذَلِكَ يَجْعَلُ اللَّهُ الرَّجْسَ عَلَى الَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ

6.125 And whomsoever Allah wills to guide, He opens his breast to Islam, and whomsoever He wills to send astray, He makes his breast closed and constricted, as if he is climbing up to the sky. Thus Allah puts the wrath on those who believe not.

أَفَمَنْ شَرَحَ اللَّهُ صَدْرَهُ لِلْإِسْلَامِ فَهُوَ عَلَى نُورٍ مِّنْ رَبِّهِ فَوَيْلٌ لِلْقَاسِيَةِ قُلُوبُهُمْ مِّنْ ذِكْرِ اللَّهِ أُولَئِكَ فِي ضَلَالٍ مُّبِينٍ

39.22 Is he whose breast Allah has opened to Islam, so that he is in light from His Lord (as he who is non-Muslim)? So, woe to those whose hearts are hardened against remembrance of Allah! They are in plain error!

Hence, after accepting Islam one must fully comprehend the meaning of word “La Illah illa Allah” and what it truly means. He must at least learn the basic as why did Allah (swt) created us and send us to this earth, and what were we suppose to do here. Learn the basic tenets of Islam that must be observed. In that aspect a person must know basic believes of Islamic system, and the actions that are required to remain in the fold of Islam, and the actions that takes him out of the fold of Islam.

We are not suggesting that every Muslim becomes scholar, but what is often observed is that person learns to pray salah and fast, but he is not aware of common mistakes of Shirk³, and he continues to practice shirk either from his past religion or what is generally common in society or custom. This is no different that by taking a citizenship of any country one must learn their laws and obeys those laws. Similarly, citizenship to Deen of Allah requires that one must learn His ((swt)) laws and obeys them, as the success of this citizenship (both in this world and hereafter) really depends on the discipline and sincerity by which one practices Allah’s Deen and obeys His laws.

³ People generally understand meaning of Shirk as worshiping idols. However, shirk is much broader term that is applied against making partnership of Allah in any of his Attributes (such as Allah is legislator). The Prophet also included various other actions into Shirk. See our discussion on Shirk later in this book.