

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

True Knowledge

Firstly, we need to define what true علم (knowledge) is. True knowledge is the knowledge of the Kitāb (Qur’ān) and Sunnah, by which we gain recognition of our Creator (معرفة), as a result, we fear Him (خشية).

When we attain the recognition of the Almighty, then the fear of Allah Ta’āla will be created. A person will then stay away from sin, Khushu (Concentration and devotion) will be created, Ihsān (awareness) will be attained, and we will fulfil the rights of His worship in all walks of life. Due to his fear, one will humble himself.

Knowledge in which recognition and His fear is not gained, is not true knowledge, rather it is just information (معلومات).¹

انّما يخشى الله من عباده العلماء

From Allah’s bondsmen (servants), it is only the learned one (those who recognise Him and the Ulema who possess understanding), who fear Him (because they appreciate His powers and greatness).²

عن جابر رضي الله عنه قال: قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم: العلم علمان، علم في القلب فذاك العلم النافع و علم على اللسان فذاك حجة الله على ابن آدم¹
رواه الحافظ ابو بكر الخطيب في تاريخه باسناد حسن، الترغيب

Also See tafsir of سورة فاطر : Verses 28 in Ma’ariful Qur’ān

سورة فاطر: ٢٨²

Someone asked Imām Sha’bi رحمه الله that, “who is an Aālim?” He said, “Aālim is he who fears Allah Ta’āla”.³

Hazrat Masud رضي الله عنه states:

ليس العلم بكثرة الحديث و لكن العلم عن كثرة الخشية

Meaning, learning a lot of Hadith, and talking too much is not knowledge, but together with it, we should have the fear of Allah Ta’āla.

Hazrat Rab’i رضي الله عنه states: “the one who does not fear Allah Ta’āla is not an Aālim.”

Hazrat Mujahid رحمه الله states: “Aālim is he who fears Allah Ta’āla”.⁴

How can we gain this true knowledge?

1. True knowledge comes with Aādab (etiquettes) of the teachers and Shuyuks, Sahabah رضي الله عنهم never raised their voices over the voice of Rasulullah صلى الله عليه و سلم or talked in a manner the way we talk to each other. They never walked in front of Rasulullah صلى الله عليه و سلم unless Rasulullah صلى الله عليه و سلم permitted them, they never initiated in giving an answer, or initiate any work, but waited for Rasulullah صلى الله عليه و سلم. For example, during eating, Rasulullah صلى الله عليه و سلم would start first, unless Rasulullah صلى الله عليه و سلم would permit them. Some Ulama have mentioned that the same Aādab should be adopted with ones Shaykh and teachers, as they are the inheritors of the Prophets.

³ سراج القاري ، كتاب العلم، جلد ١ ، ٢٨٠

⁴ See tafsir of سورة فاطر : Verses 28 in Ma’ariful Qur’ān

Once Hazrat Abud'dardah رضى الله عنه was walking in front of Hazrat Abu Bakr رضى الله عنه and Rasulullah صلى الله عليه و سلم reprimanded him. It is also against Aadāb to talk, raise voices etc in the gatherings of Hadith⁵. We should sit respectfully the way it has been taught to us by Hazrat Jibrail عليه السلام in Hadith-e-Jibrail. Imām Bukhari رحمه الله عليه has also brought a chapter in Sahih Bukhari (باب من برك على ركبتيه عند الإمام أو المحدث) that a student should sit on his knees (like in Salāh)⁶ in front of his teacher.⁷

2. To acquire knowledge through Suhbat (company) of our righteous Ulama and Shuyukh, who are adherent to the Sunnah, by attending their gatherings, by sitting in their company, true knowledge will be attained. Suhbat of righteous Ulama will ignite the love of Allah Ta'āla. Connect with those who are connected.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَكُونُوا مَعَ الصَّادِقِينَ

"O those who believe! Fear Allah and be with the truthful (faithful) people!"⁸

The way to attain the quality of Taqwa is through the company of the pious and the truthful.⁹

The commentators have written, that by 'truthful', it means the mystics (Shuyukhs), and the true lovers of Allah Ta'āla, for whoever

⁵ See tafsir of سورة الحجرات : Verse 1 – 3 in Ma'ariful Qur'ān

⁶ In Urdu: دو زانو

⁷ رقم الحديث: ٩٣ كتاب العلم، جلد ١

⁸ سورة التوبة: ١١٩

⁹ See tafsir of سورة التوبة : Verse 19 in Ma'ariful Qur'ān

attaches himself to them and listens to their sermons, he will attain very high standards of spirituality.¹⁰

3. By making dua to Allah Ta'āla to grant us increase in knowledge and its true understanding, Rasulallah صلى الله عليه و سلم was told to make the following dua by Allah Ta'ala: رب زدني علما (and say, “O my Lord, increase me in Knowledge”).¹¹

4. Taking duas from our teachers by doing their kidmat (serving them).

Once Rasulallah صلى الله عليه و سلم visited the toilet and Hazrat Abdullah Ibn Abbas رضي الله عنها placed water for wudhu for Rasulallah صلى الله عليه و سلم. When Rasulallah صلى الله عليه و سلم came out from the toilet and saw the water, he صلى الله عليه و سلم asked, who placed the water? Rasulallah صلى الله عليه و سلم was told that it was Hazrat Abdullah Ibn Abbas رضي الله عنها, Rasulallah صلى الله عليه و سلم made the following dua for him:

اللهم فقهه في الدين

“O Allah grant him the understanding of Deen”¹²

May Allah Ta'āla grant us His recognition, His Fear, and make us amongst the righteous servants of Allah Ta'ala.

و صلى الله على النبي الكريم و الحمد لله رب العالمين

Sajid Ibrahim Sufi

8th December 2021 / 4 Jumada Al-Awwal 1443

¹⁰ Fadhil e Aāmal, Virtues of Tabligh pages: 43 & 44 (Altaf & Sons).

¹¹ See tafsir of سورة طه : Verse 114 in Ma'ariful Qur'ān

¹² بخاري، كتاب الوضوء، رقم الحديث: ١٤٣