



Knowing Islam

Quran is the word of Allah (SWT) and Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) is the last messenger of Allah (SWT). Then now a question arises that what is the purpose of our life? Allah (SWT) mentioned in the Quran,

“And I did not create the jinn and mankind except to worship Me”.
[Surah Adh-Dhariyat: 56]

Humans in one way or another are the slave to something; either we are the slave to our Nafs or we are the slave to Allah (SWT) but the real liberation comes through slavery. Allah (SWT) has provided a code of conduct for the humans to lead their life. If the person will not follow the code of conduct, he/she will become the slave of his/her own Nafs. For example, a person addicted to alcohol, addicted to haram relationships or addicted to drugs thinks that he/she is free but instead they are now slaves of their own Nafs. Even realizing that they are on the wrong path they are not able to quit that slavery. On the other hand, when a person enslaves himself to Allah (SWT) his life becomes smoother and Allah (SWT) has promised the person to give him **Hayat-e-Taiyaba** – a good life. A question that is always asked is about that Allah (SWT) has said in Quran that,

“There is no compulsion in religion”. ***[Surah Al-Baqarah: 255]***

What does it mean? Whether everything in the deen (religion) is optional or not? The answer to the question is that this ayah refers to the fact that we cannot force any person to accept Islam. We can give him Dawah towards Islam, but cannot force him. But once a person accepts Islam, then there is a compulsion, he should follow the code of conduct defined by Allah (SWT) in deen (religion). For example, if you want to join some school or a college the joining is in the person's own will but after joining it is the compulsion to follow the code of conduct of that school or college. If any student acts or behaves against the rules and regulations of that school or college, he will be held accountable by the authorities. This is the reason that the authority given to anybody is a responsibility and that person will be accountable for it. E.g. In a house, a father is head of the house. He is responsible for the laws to be followed in home.

Perspectives of Knowing Islam

1. The Sources of Islamic Knowledge
2. Importance of Tauheed
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The Sources of Islamic Knowledge

There are two basic sources of Islamic knowledge

1. The Noble Quran
2. Sunnah of Messenger (PBUH)

1. The Noble Quran

The basic source of knowledge in Islam is the Quran and till the Day of Judgement there will be no change in the Quran for any Muslim.

The second source of knowledge is the Sunnah or Hadith of Holy Prophet Mohammad (PBUH). Both sources must be interpreted primarily in the light of the earliest generation as they have first-hand knowledge from the source i.e. Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) himself. For example, the companion of the Prophet Mohammad (PBUH), Hazrat Abdullah ibn-e-Masud (R.A) and Hazrat Abdullah ibn Abbas (R.A) narrated that they have knowledge of about 80 Surahs of Quran that in which context they are revealed. So, while interpreting the Quran and hadith, it is very important to refer to these companions of the Prophet Mohammad (PBUH).

It is very important to take verses of the Quran in the right context. For example, Allah (SWT) mentioned in Surah Tauba and Surah Anfal that ***“Kill them where you find them”*** referring to the Non-Muslims. If any layman will interpret this ayah without having the background knowledge, it can cause much damage, but when we refer this ayah considering the context in which it is revealed we came to know that it specifically refers to the battlefield not in general. Otherwise, the killing of one innocent human being means that you kill the whole humanity. Similarly, saving the life of one human means saving the whole humanity.

The verses of Holy Quran and Hadith of Holy Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) should match on a common subject to having the clear picture that what Allah (SWT) wanted to teach us. Often times people take the specific verses from Holy Quran and make them general and vice versa. Either way, they will go wrong. That is why we have scholars that have knowledge of religion and we can refer to them for evidence. In Surah Al-Maida, the fifth Surah of Holy Quran, Allah (SWT) mentions in verses.

“And whosoever does not judge by what Allah has revealed, such are the Kafirun.”
[Surah Al-Maida 5: 44]

And whosoever does not judge by that which Allah has revealed, such are the Zalimun.”
[Surah Al-Maida 5: 45]

“And whosoever does not judge by what Allah has revealed (then) such (people) are the Fasiqun.” [Surah Al-Maida 5: 47]

“And so, judge among them by what Allah has revealed and follow not their vain desires.” [Surah Al-Maida 5: 49]

Which means that we should judge and live according to the book of Allah (SWT) otherwise we will be considered as *Kafirun*, *Zalimun*, and *Fasiqun*.

We make judgements on what we see. There are exceptions too; for example, Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) offered absentee funeral prayer (ghaibana Namaz-e-Janaza) for Najashi – the king of Abbasynia. Apparently, he died as a disbeliever, but when Ashab's of Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) inquired, the Holy Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) mentions that he died upon Islam. He did not confess it due to social pressures from his tribe or fear of death.

Allah (SWT) mentioned that one who is not judging by the book of Allah (SWT) is a disbeliever, but this does not take any person from major folds of Islam. He will be considered as a sinner. On the other hand, if the person is involved in black magic he/she will out from the circle of Islam. It is one of the major sins that will nullify him/her from being Muslim. Shirk is also one of the sins which nullify us from Islam.

2. Sunnah of Messenger (PBUH)

Allah (SWT) mentions in the Holy Quran,

“Allah has sent down to you the Book (The Qur'an), and al-Hikmah, and taught you that which you knew not.” [Surah An-Nisa: 113]

Imam Shafi' mentions that it is the unanimous consensus of Ulema that Hikmah refers the Sunnah of Holy Prophet Mohammad (PBUH). Quran and Sunnah are both parts of the revelation. The Quran is in the form of the book while the Sunnah in the form of actions of Prophet Mohammad (PBUH). Allah (SWT) mention in Surah Al – Najam that “Whatever he (Prophet Mohammad (PBUH)) says – it is but a revelation”. Allah mentions about prayers in Holy Quran, but not once how-to prayer. It is not mentioned that we have to pray 2 Faraz rakat for Fajr or 4 for Zuhr, we find this from the Sunnah of Holy Prophet (PBUH) and this was also a part of revelation.

If a person mentions that he/she is following Quran, but not Sunnah, then he/she is missing one important part of revelation. That is why Allah (SWT) is mentioned in the Holy Quran that,

And whatever the Messenger gives you, take it, and whatever he forbids you, leave it. And fear Allah: truly Allah is severe in punishment.” [Surah Al-Hashr: 7]

"It is not fitting for a Believer, man or woman, when a matter has been decided by Allah and His Messenger to have any option about their decision..." [Surah Al-Ahzab: 36]

"Whoever obeys the Messenger, he indeed obeys Allah." [Surah An-Nisa: 80]

All the above-mentioned references throw light on the importance of the Sunnah of Holy Prophet Mohammad (PBUH). According to Ahle-Sunnat School of thought, the most authentic books of Ahadith are Shahih Muslim and Sahih Bukhari. The criteria for selection of Ahadith were very strict by these scholars. It is narrated that Imam Bukhari collected more than 1.5 lac Ahadith but he took only 7000 to put into Sahih – the most authentic. There were other Ahadith too, that are known to be fabricated or whose narrators cannot be verified. Those Ahadith are also mentioned in other Ahadith books to give people awareness.

As Holy Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) mentioned that "Whosoever attributes to me something that I have not said, then, let him reserve his seat in hellfire".

Sahih Bukhari and Muslim have known to have only Sahih Ahadith in them. The Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) said, "The best of the people is my generation, then, those after them, then those after them..." [Bukhari / Muslim / Abu Dawood / Tirmidhi / An -Nasai]. Also, Allah (SWT) is mentioned in the Holy Quran,

"And the foremost to embrace Islam of the Muhajirun and the Ansar (i.e. the Companions) and also those who followed them exactly (in Faith). Allah (SWT) is well-pleased with them as they are well-pleased with Him. He (SWT) has prepared for them Gardens under which rivers flow (Paradise), to dwell therein forever. That is the supreme success."
[Surah At-Taubah: 100]