

# Faith Without Knowledge is Dangerous

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Allah says, "...it is only those who have knowledge (ilm) among his slaves that fear Allah..." 35:28.

And Allah says, He [Allah] grants wisdom to whom He pleases; and he to whom wisdom is granted indeed receives a benefit overflowing. But none will grasp the Message except men of understanding. 2:269

And, ...Allah will raise up to (suitable) ranks (and degrees) those of you who believe and who have been granted knowledge. 58:11

And Say: Travel through the earth and see how Allah originated creation; so will Allah produce the second creation (of the Afterlife): for Allah has power over all things. 29:20

My brothers and sisters in Al Islam, I often say, "Faith without knowledge is dangerous." Please cry out to your Lord in the day and the night, "O my Sustainer! Increase my knowledge." 20:114. Do not let yourself be misled like those of old nor let yourself fall into the traps of the unscrupulous amongst us who are working so hard to destroy our great religion.

Most of you already know the story of how I came to Islam. But I will put the highlights here for those who do not know. I was a part of a group of Christians who wanted to destroy Al Islam. I was learning Quraan and sunnah in an effort to twist them so that I might mislead those who cared about their deen even a little to make them believe that what I was proposing was Islamically correct.

You can see the results of people like me when you look to the misguided Muslims today who say that the woman's khymar need not cover the hair, only drape over the bossom. You can also see it in ploys like George Bush's when he quoted out of context, "...And if they incline to peace, incline thou also to it, and trust in Allah..." 8:61. Of course, Bush never bothered to mention that this verse was cradled in a lesson about inclining to peace if you have the power to maintain the peace. Why should he? He succeed in misleading the ignorant Muslims who followed his lead and were thrilled that he was even able to quote from the Quraan. It served its purpose.

Thus, we can see that faith without knowledge is dangerous. It opens the door for misguidance and straying from the deen of Allah. So what is a Muslim to do? The first step is to make a clear intention. We must want to seek knowledge for the sake of Allah. We must recognize that Allah has made it obligatory on us to have the basic knowledge of our religion, and then we must seek to acquire that knowledge for His sake and His sake only. This is of extreme importance. Remember the lesson about the first three who will be dragged into the hellfire.

Narrated AbuHurayrah: It has been narrated on the authority of Sulayman ibn Yasar who said:

People dispersed from around AbuHurayrah, and Natil, who was from the Syrians, said to him: O Shaykh, relate (to us) a tradition you have heard from the Messenger of Allah (peace\_be\_upon\_him). He said: Yes. I heard the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) say: ***The first man (whose case) will be decided on the Day of Judgment, will be a man who died as a martyr. He shall be brought (before the Judgment Seat). Allah will make him recount His blessings (i.e. the blessings which He had bestowed upon him) and he will recount them (and admit having enjoyed them in his life). (Then) will Allah say: What did you do (to requite these blessings)? He will say: I fought for Thee until I died as a martyr. Allah will say: You have told a lie. You fought so that you might be called a "brave warrior". And you were called so. (Then) orders will be passed against him and he will be dragged with his face downward and cast into Hell.***

***Then there will be brought forward a man who acquired knowledge and imparted it (to others) and recited the Qur'an. He will be brought, Allah will make him recount His blessings and he will recount them (and admit having enjoyed them in his lifetime). Then will Allah ask: What did you do (to requite these blessings)? He will say: I acquired knowledge and disseminated it and recited the Qur'an, seeking Thy pleasure. Allah will say: You have told a lie. You acquired knowledge so that you might be called "a scholar", and you recited the Qur'an so that it might be said: "He is a Qari" and such has been said. Then orders will be passed against him and he shall be dragged with his face downward and cast into the Fire.***

***Then will be brought a man whom Allah had made abundantly rich and had granted every kind of wealth. He will be brought, Allah will make him recount His blessings and he will recount them and (admit having enjoyed them in his lifetime). Allah will (then) ask: What have you done (to requite these blessings)? He will say: I spent money in every cause in which Thou wished that it should be spent. Allah will say: You are lying. You did (so) that it might be said about (you): "He is a generous fellow", and so it was said. Then will Allah pass orders and he will be dragged with his face downward and thrown into Hell. Sahih Muslim: Book 19, Number 4688:***

Second, we must recognize that there exists a lot of wrong information in our nation. Those who have transferred knowledge without foundation and those who have deliberately tried to destroy our deen have been very busy over the centuries, and now, the search for the truth is a bit more complex, so we must learn the basics from scratch. Do not assume that because your parents were Muslims that everything you learned is correct. You must investigate for yourself. Once you reach an age where you can research it, you need to go back and verify from the original sources. Are you making salat or wudu the way the Prophet did? Or are you making it according to the way your parents, your culture, your imam etc. did? One of the signs of the last day is that religious knowledge will be taken away and that we will be taught by those who have no knowledge.

Narrated 'Abdullah bin 'Amr bin Al' As: I heard Allah's Apostle saying, "***Allah does not take away the knowledge, by taking it away from (the hearts of) the people, but takes it away by the death of the religious learned men till when none of the (religious learned men) remains, people will take as their leaders ignorant persons who when consulted will give their verdict without knowledge. So they will go astray and will lead the people astray.***" Sahih Bukhari: Volume 1, Book 3, Number 100:

This is a very real danger! We can already see this in our masjids and our homes. People find it so easy to say what they think is correct when they have never researched it for themselves. Most can not even tell you where they learned something or where you can find the dalil (evidence) but they will fight you about its correctness, even when they are presented the Quraan and sunnah that proves the opposite. Allah Preserve us!

I was once in a masjid when a sister who seemed to have good intentions said to the other sisters that regardless of what they choose to do on the outside, that when they make salat, they need to be sure that they are properly covered. They need to make sure their headpiece is big enough and not see-through. They need to be covered with a loose dress or skirt that covers all the legs and the feet; they need to make sure their clothes is neither see-through or tight. This is so that their salat will be accepted by Allah. They must meet the minimum requirements.

The reaction was that a group of sisters got upset with her, and said to her, "Who are you to teach us our religion?" They claimed the religion of their fathers. They had come from the best Muslim countries and they knew right from wrong, and they did not have to go to these extremes. The sister was taken aback by this, but kept her calm long enough to show bring them the Quraan and a few of the hadiths that spoke of the minimum cover for women. The women literally waved the books away and said, "Don't give us this, what do the scholars say?" She tried to tell them the opinions of the four schools, and they rejected these. At this point, from all the insults that were coming from these women, the woman gave up, and went to a room to cry. She had been humiliated and insulted for bring forth the clear teachings of Allah and His messenger. This is the state our nation has fallen to. Allah guide us!

Brothers and sisters, Alhamdulillah, we still have the basic knowledge preserved. We have scholars who know the true Islam and who teach it, and we need to take advantage of them while we still can. So many of our great scholars are aging. We need to seek out their knowledge and preserve it against a day when knowledge will be taken from us. A day that does not seem too far away. When we look around us, we can see this phenomenon of people taking "...as their leaders ignorant persons who when consulted will give their verdict without knowledge. So they will go astray and will lead the people astray." This is already a reality! We have forgotten the basics. Allah says,

**...Say: Are those equal, those who know and those who do not know? It is those who are endowed with understanding that remember (Allah's Message). 39:9**

Third, we need to be sure that we are all educated, men and women. Seeking knowledge has its great blessings,

**Narrated AbuHurayrah: Allah's Apostle (peace\_be\_upon\_him) said, "...He who treads the path in search of knowledge, Allah will make that path easy, leading to Paradise for him and those persons who assemble in one of the houses of Allah (mosques), recite the Book of Allah and learn and teach the Qur'an (among themselves). There will descend upon them tranquillity, mercy will cover them, the angels will surround them and Allah will mention them in the presence of those near Him. He who is slow-paced in doing good deeds, his (long) descent does not make him go ahead."** Sahih Muslim: Book 34, Number 6518:

But once we have learned, we can not allow it to remain stagnant. We must pass on this knowledge to our brothers and sisters.

**Narrated AbuHurayrah: Allah's Messenger (peace\_be\_upon\_him) said: *When a man dies, his acts come to an end, but three, recurring charity, or knowledge (by which people) benefit, or a pious son, who prays for him (for the deceased).*** Sahih Muslim: Book 12, Number 4005.

When we teach the correct knowledge to our husbands, wives, children, family, friends etc..., we will receive a continuing blessing. Imagine the blessing of teaching Fatiha to a child or a new Muslim. Every time he/she says it in salat, it is a blessing on your scale. Every time he/she teaches it to someone else, it is a blessing. This one small deed, done sincerely, can be for us a mountain of blessings on the day of Judgement while we know it not. But in teaching, we need to be very careful. We can not teach what we do not know. The scholars agree that half of knowledge is knowing when to say, "I don't know." We need to remain silent when we can not bring the dalil. We must not teach that we can not verify. Instead, we lead the person to one of knowledge. We can not give fatwa unless we are trained to do so. Nor should we seek fetwa from one who is not trained. You would not go to a nurse and ask her to operate on you. You would go to a doctor. The nurse can help you with a limited service, but she is not trained for surgery. In the same way, you may ask a man or woman of limited knowledge for some basics which he/she can verify but you can not ask them for fetwa. And if you know you have limited knowledge, you must never give fetwa.

We must strive to be from the knowledgeable. They are among the two who we can actually envy for this purpose:

Narrated Ibn Masud: I heard the Prophet saying, *"There is no envy except in two: a person whom Allah has given wealth and he spends it in the right way, and a person whom Allah has given wisdom (i.e. religious knowledge) and he gives his decisions accordingly and teaches it to the others."* Sahih Bukhari: Volume 2, Book 24, Number 490:

But, we must recognize our limitations. Islamic knowledge is not something you can acquire in a few days, months or years. It is a lifetime of study. Most scholars are not even experts in all, they specialize: Usool al Quraan (Quraanic Sciences), Usul al Hadith (Hadith Sciences), Islamic History, General principles of Islam etc... It is not an easy matter. And remember, the sin for the insincere seeker of knowledge is so great because the responsibility is so large as is the reward.

Last but not least, I want you to notice that when it came to talking about the people of knowledge, I did not limit it to men. Some of our greatest scholars have been women. Women not only have the right to study and teach, it is their responsibility. We can not keep the woman from learning unless we want to kill our deen. The woman is the primary teacher for the children. She spends the most time with them and is their first school. But her knowledge need not be limited to the basic knowledge she will pass on to her children. She is another source for teaching society. Throughout Islamic history, starting with Um al Muminiin, Aisha, our women have been teachers and scholars for men and women. Most of our great scholars had at least one woman teacher - if not more. Read this small excerpt from a Khutbah by: Sheikh Abdullah Hakim Quick in Canada:

*"The first shaheed, the first martyr in Islam, Sumaiyyah, radiallahu 'anha, a WOMAN! The first person to give his life of this religion -- before the men -- the shaheed. Aiesha, radiallahu 'anha, reported the second most hadith over 2,210 hadiths, authentic traditions. When you are reading hadith you are mostly reading Abu Hurairah, or Aiesha, may Allah be pleased with them. So a woman is not supposed to be educated??? A woman is not supposed to know "isnad" (the chain of hadith) ??? Not supposed to know tafseer??? When men used to come to her to learn about the tafseer. Shalaby reports that Nafeesah, who was a descendent of Ali, radiallahu anhu, karramallahu wajhu, was such a great authority of the hadith traditions that Imam Ash-Shafi'ie, rahimahu Allah, learned from her when he was in Al-Fustaat, which is the original Cairo. Shalaby also reports that Kareemah bint Ahmed Al Marwazi, may Allah be pleased with her, was a transmitter and interpreter of Sahih Al-Bukhari. Muhammed Al-Abrashi*

wrote that Ibn Asaakir, a famous hadith transmitter, had over 80 women ("thamaneena mar'ah) among his highest regard of the 'ulema. 80 women who he regarded at the highest level of scholarship.

*It is also reported that for As-Suyuti, rahimahu Allah and Ibn Hazm, rahimahu Allah some of their teachers were women. It is also reported: Fatima bint Maalik Ibn Anas was a famous student of "Al Muwwata". And so we can go on and on speaking about women and education; the seeking of knowledge (talibul ilm) is fareeda ala kulli Muslim -- all Muslims are supposed to seek knowledge male or female. If the woman in your house does not know halal from haram and you are out fi sabeelillah and you come home to eat food, the food that you eat may be haraam. If she doesn't know Qur'an, if she doesn't know Sunnah and you are away, how will your children learn? Much of their time is spent with their MOTHER. And so an educated woman is a positive thing for Islam; and it is ignorance, it is "jahil" when the man is stopping her from Islamic education."*

We must all learn the religion, and there is no proof (actually the contrary is proven) that a woman has a lessor ability to act as a teacher. As long as all Islamic etiquette is in place, it is both allowed and from the sunnah of our great companions who took Umm al Mumineen, Aisha as their teacher.

Finally, I leave you all with this: Knowledge is incumbent upon us all. If we allow ourselves to remain ignorant or to follow whatever so-called scholar the wind blows in, we are a doomed nation. We must be able to differentiate between true knowledge and hogwash. A few hints: When your scholar starts saying, "I think..." or "I feel..." without giving Quraan and authentic hadiths, start worrying. When your scholar starts to teach you something that directly contradicts the words of Allah or the sunnah of the prophet, get very worried. And when your scholar starts to have vision, run!!!!

May Allah guide us all to the straight path. May He give us knowledge and faith and protect us in that faith till we die. And may we all die as Muslims loving, fearing and worshipping Allah as He commanded us to do and taught us to do through our beloved prophet's teachings and examples. Ameen!