

Obstacles in the Path of Knowledge: Introduction

An explanation of some points from "Obstacles in the Path of Knowledge" (of Shaikh Abdus-Salaam Burjis) by Abu Hakeem Bilaal Davies. Transcribed by Hisham Abu Maryam and Umm Maryam for SalafiPublications.Com, edited and amended by Abu Iyaad Amjad Rafiq, checked by Abu Talhah Dawud Burbank.

Introduction

All Praise is due to Allaah, we praise Him, seek His aid and His Forgiveness. We seek refuge in Allaah from the evils of our souls and the evils of our actions. Whomsoever Allaah guides there is none to misguide and whomsoever Allaah misguides there is none to guide. I bear witness that there is none worthy of worship except Allaah, alone, without any partners and I bear witness that Muhammad is His servant and messenger.

Introductory Notes by Abu Hakeem:

There is no doubt that Ilm(knowledge) is a means to all forms of good, good in the dunya this life and good in the akhira the hereafter. The deen(religion) is something that is only truly obtained through gaining correct knowledge of it.

The Prophet (sallallahu alaihi wasallam) said: "One will gain Ilm when one attempts to seek that Ilm (i.e. teaching oneself)" Collected by Imaam Daraqutni in 'al-Afraad' and al-Khateeb al Baghdaadi in Taareekh al Baghdaad and is declared 'hasan' by Sheikh Naasir in 'Saheeh al Jaami' no. 2328.

Ibn Abbas (radiallahu anhuma) mentioned: "Allah (subhana wata'ala) has taken charge of the one who reads the Qur'aan and acts upon that which is in it. That he will not go astray in this life and he will not be sad and grieved in the hereafter."

And then Ibn Abbas (radiallahu anhuma) recited the statement of Allah:

"If there comes to you from Me, guidance, then whosoever follows My guidance, then he will not go astray neither will he be grieved. And as for the one who turns away from My guidance, then verily to him is an unpleasant life and We will raise him on the Day of Judgment blind. He will say: 'O my Lord! Why have you raised me blind when verily I was a seeing person in the dunya?' He will be answered: 'Indeed there came to you my signs and you forgot them, so today you will be forgotten'." (Collected by Ibn Abi Shaiba in 'al-Musannaf' (13/371) and Abul Fadl Abdur Rahmaan ar-Raazi in 'Fadaa'il al-Qur'aan /84 and Imaam Haakim in his 'Mustadrak' 2/381, see 'at-Tafseer as Saheeh 3/382)

From that what is apparent from the ayah is that it refers to the individual who received the guidance and then let the guidance go.

And Allah, (subhaana wata'ala) has said:

"And whosoever turns away blindly from the remembrance of Ar-Rahman [i.e. this Quran and worship of Allah] We appoint for him shaitan [devil] to be a Qarin [companion] to him. And verily they [satans] hinder them from the path [of Allah], but they think they are guided aright! Till, when [such a one] comes to Us, he says [to his Qarin] would that between me and you were the distance of the two east's [or the east and the west] – a worst [type of] companion[indeed]!" (az-Zukhruf 43:36 – 38).

Allah (subhaana wata'ala) guides with His Light, Islam and the Messenger (sallallahu alaihi wasallam) as Light. As for his referring to His Book as light then it is that which occurs in His statement, "Therefore believe in Allah and His Messenger and in the light that we have sent down", (Taghaabun 64:8). As for his reference to Islaam as light then it is in His saying "Is he whose breast allah has opened to islaam, such that he is upon light from his Lord (as he who is non-Muslim)?" (Az-Zumar 39:22).

As for him referring to his Messenger as light then Allah says, "O People of the Book (Jews and Christians), now has there come to you Our Messenger, explaining to you much of that which you used to hide from the scripture and passing over (i.e. leaving out without explaining) much. Indeed there has come to you from Allah a light (the Prophet Muhammad) and a clear book, wherewith Allah guides all those who seek his good pleasure to the ways of peace, and he brings them out of the darkness by His will unto light and guides them to a straight way". (al-Maidah 5:15-16).

Reported by Ibn Abbas (radiallahu anhuma) that the Prophet (sallallahu alaihi wasallam) used to make du'a as he used to walk to salat-ul-fajr and he used to say: "O Allah! Place in my heart Light and in my eyes Light and in my hearing Light. And place on my right Light and on my left Light and below me light and above me light, Let me be in absolute Light." (Bukhaaree and Muslim). Thus it is by gaining knowledge of this light and acting upon it that Allah will remove from them the humiliation that they face and raise their ranks.

Reported from Ibn Umar (radiallahu anhuma) that the Messenger of Allah (sallallahu alaihi wasallam) said: "If you trade using the 'Eena (a type of usury) and you hold onto the tails of the cows and you leave Jihaad, then Allah will place upon you humiliation and he will not remove it from you until you return to your deen." (Collected by Abu Dawood 3462 and al Baihaqi in 'as-Sunan al Kubra' (5/316) and ad Dulaabi in 'al Kunaa' and declared authentic by Shaykh Naasir in 'as Silsilah as Saheehah' no.11)

The ayah: "And that was our Proof which We gave to Ibrahim against his people. We raise whom We will in degrees." Al-An'aam (6:83)

And the ayah concerning Yusuf (alaihi salaam): "...We raise to degrees whom We will..." (Yusuf 12:76). Imam Malik (rahimullah) mentioned about these ayaat that they are raised in levels with knowledge.

Shaykh-ul-Islam, Ibn Taimiyyah (rahimahullah) mentioned regarding these ayahs:

"With regards to Yusuf (alaihis salaam), Allah (subhaana wata'ala) raised him in levels by giving him Ilm of the land and how to rule and cultivate it. And with regards to Ibrahim (alaihis salaam), he was raised with levels of Ilm, as with this Ilm he defended Tawheed and repelled Shirk." He says: "So the story of Ibraheem was concerning knowledge of proofs and debating used to repel the harm of the one who opposes (Islaam) away from the religion, and the story of Yusuf was in relation to the knowledge of politics and ruling the land in order to obtain desired benefits. So the first was related to knowledge of that which repels harm from the religion and the second concerning knowledge of that which brings benefit...". (14/493)

And he also mentioned that: "Sin is the product of jahl (ignorance)." He says: "As for evil deeds then they stem from ignorance and oppression for indeed no-one commits an ugly evil deed or due to desires and his souls inclination toward that, nor will a person leave a compulsory good deed except due to his ignorance of it being compulsory or due to his disliking that deed. So in reality, all evil deeds return back to ignorance, otherwise if he was upon true knowledge that this action will cause him conclusive harm he wouldn't commit, and indeed this is from the characteristics of those who possess intellects..." (from 'al Hasanatu was Saiyi'ah' p.70)

Thus some of the Salaf mentioned that Ilm is the way to every type of good virtue. One of the Salaf, when admonishing said: "O my brother! Verily, the offspring of sin is heedlessness. And verily, this, heedlessness brings about the hardness of the heart. And verily, this hardness of the heart makes a person distant from Allah and verily being distant from Allah brings about the Fire."

The speaker says that they are working through a book by Shaykh Abdus-Salaam Burjis (from Riyadh in Saudi Arabia), called: '**The Obstacles in the Path of Knowledge**'. It contains ten very important obstacles to be remembered.

Benefits From The First Lesson

1. The religion is acquired through correct knowledge of it.
2. Knowledge is by learning it.
3. Whoever learns the Qur'an and acts upon it will have the protection of Allaah.
4. Receiving guidance (i.e. knowledge) and then letting it go makes one inherits unhappiness and blindness (i.e. in knowledge and insight, not vision) and makes one's company the company of devils.
5. The light of guidance is actually Allaah's Book, Islaam and the Messenger. All of them are light, from the point of view of guidance.
6. Acquiring and acting upon this "light" is what removes humiliation and raises the ranks.
7. Raising in ranks actually means raising in knowledge.
8. Knowledge can be that which repels harm and also that which brings about benefit.
9. All sins have their origin in ignorance.
10. Therefore, all virtues lie in knowledge and acting upon it.