

The Knowledge of the UNSEEN - ILM-E-GHAYB



by
Professor Dr. Muhammad Mas'ud Ahmed, M.A. PhD.

Translated by
Prof. Azimi Faqir Muhammad Shaikh

Bismillahir Rahmanir Rahim

www.al-adaab.org

1. WHAT IS KNOWLEDGE?

It is truly said: KNOWLEDGE is power - a great power, with tremendous potentialities and unfathomable capabilities. The ever growing expanse of knowledge in the modern age in all direction has amply unfolded and demonstrated the great significance and influence of knowledge over all things existing on the surface of the earth and beyond.

The Holy Quran - the most accomplished and the final revealed Divine Book has laid great stress on the acquisition of knowledge and it's blessings, inviting human Endeavour in seeking and preserving more and more knowledge for leading a successful life in this world and the Hereafter.

The very first Revealed verses of the Holy Quran proclaim in an unambiguous manner that the acquisition of knowledge is the most fundamental pre-requisite for survival and development of existence (Wajud) in all its pervasive sense. Says the Holy Quran: "**He (Allah the Almighty) taught (man) the use of the Pen (the basic implement in the field of knowledge) and taught man which he knew not (a divine invitation for research and advancement of knowledge so as to lead the life in conformity and obedience to Divine Pleasure).**" (Surah Alaq: Verses 4-5)

At another place it is said: "**O my Lord! Advance me in knowledge.**" (Surah Taha: Verse 114) These divine Revelations brought in focus the significance of knowledge to motivate and enlighten the human mind to seek more and more knowledge in any conceivably beneficial manner.

The Holy Quran is a treasure house of Knowledge and Wisdom. It contains references or mentions at more than 800 places relating to knowledge and its derivatives, i.e. the innumerable branches of knowledge which continue to grow as the life advances from stage to stage. Similarly, references to "books" and "writing" are at more than 600 places in the Holy Quran. This clearly indicates the divine emphasis on knowledge and its acquisition at all levels of life.

In a tradition (Hadith), the Holy Prophet (*Sall Allahu 'alaihi wa Aalihi wa*

sallim) has said: "I have been raised as a teacher and an accomplisher of (refined) manners." (Ibn-i-Abd al-Birr: Jami bayan al I'lm wa fazlihi, p. 47) The Holy Prophet (*Sall Allahu 'alaihi wa Aalihi wa sallim*) has laid great emphasis as a compulsive obligation of the Ummah to seek more and more knowledge and brought forth the blissful significance of knowledge. (*ibid.*, p. 46, 49)

Sayyidinaa Ali (*Karramallahu wajhul Kareem*) has said: "The real dignity to men is through learning." The Holy Quran itself bears testimony to the significance of knowledge when it's says that it was on account of his knowledge that Almighty Allah chose Sayyidinaa Talut (*alaihis salaam*) as the King of the Bani Israel, "Allah hath filled Talut with Knowledge and bodily prowess." (Surah Baqarah: Verse 247) The superiority of Sayyidinaa Adam (*alaihis salaam*) - the epitomic symbol of human progeny - over angels (and all the creations) was on account of this knowledge alone.(Surah Baqarah: Verse 31)

All these examples illustrate the significance and dignified evaluation of the acquisition of knowledge in the fields of human pre-eminence, viz. the Prophetic assignment, the leadership and Five Regent kingship for guidance the human destining as the Vicegerent of Allah on earth.

2. THE TWO CATEGORIES OF KNOWLEDGE

In its abstract sense, there are two kinds of Knowledge (or learning); the one which is taught in Madrasahs, school, colleges and universities (in the progressive order). For a lay-man as well as for the majority of the populace this is what constitutes the knowledge and it is believed to be sufficient to satisfy our material quest and urge in this behalf.

However, there is yet another branch of knowledge which is taught and acquired directly or straightaway through the divine agency, with the functional audio-visual aids, such as books, papers, pens or such-like paraphernalia, needing neither the teaching institutes, such as schools, colleges, universities, etc. nor the professional teachers and degree holders. This is the transcendental or divine sector of knowledge, which in Qur'anic

terminology is known as "‘Ilmul Ghaib" or the "Knowledge of the Unseen" (Surah Kah’f: Verse 65) and which constitutes one of the fundamental tenets of Islamic belief. In fact, the belief and unbelief in the Unseen (Ghaib) is the distinguishing mark of a person being a Muslim or a Heathen. (Surah Baqarah: Verse 3)

This is the branch of knowledge which is super human in nature surpassing the human intellect as also the five proverbial senses on their own. The Knowledge of the Unseen (‘Ilmul Ghaib) is superior to and dominant over all other knowledge in any field of human activity, defying all methods of imparting and receiving education and knowledge. This is essentially an emblem of Divine Grace bestowed upon the chosen servants of Allah, like the gentle blissful rain showered upon the hearts and minds of the esteemed recipients on earth.

3. VERSES OF THE QURAN PERTAINING TO ‘ILMUL GHAIB

There are many verses in the Holy Quran in which there is mentioned or reference to ‘Ilmul Ghaib (The Knowledge of Unseen). It is clear from these verses that this ‘Ilmul Ghaib pertain and belong to Almighty Allah alone.

The following verses of the Holy Quran corroborates this proposition:-

- A. "With Him are the Keys of the Unseen; the treasure that none knows but He." (Surah An'am: Verse 59)
- B. "I know the secrets of the heaven and earth." (Surah Baqarah: Verse 33)
- C. "Say: O Prophet (*Sall Allahu ‘alaihi wa Aalihi wa sallim*)! The Unseen is for Allah". (Surah Yunus: Verse 20)
- D. "The Holy Prophet (*Sall Allahu ‘alaihi wa Aalihi wa sallim*) is asked to declare: Say, I tell you not that the Treasures of Allah are with me, nor do know on my own, what is hidden (In the Unseen)." (Surah Hud: Verse 31)

From these verses, it is learnt that the Knowledge of the Unseen ('Ilmul Ghaib) belongs as His most exclusive supreme prerogative to Allah the Almighty. None on his own, can know the Unseen (Ghaib) unless bestowed by Almighty Allah as a grace (and not as a matter of right to claim).

A little probe into these verses would reveal that while even the minutest part of the Ghaib remains in the Divine Authority, it is not to be said anywhere that Allah the Almighty does not grant this knowledge even to anyone among his servants nor that the treasure of the Ghaib remain unbestowed and unshared by anyone else. This the prime point of consideration on which the Ummah must devote thoughtful attention to avoid any pitfalls in assuming or imbibing any self-founded notions of 'Ilmul Ghaib.

This point is stressed again and again in the Holy Quran:

- A. **"He (Allah the Almighty) alone is the Knower of the Unseen; He does not make anyone acquainted with the mysteries except the apostle whom He has chosen." (Surah Jinn: Verse 26)**

- B. **"Allah will not disclose to you the secret of the unknown, but He chooses of His apostles whom He pleases." (Surah Ale Imran: Verse 179)**

4. LEVELS OF 'ILMUL GHAIB POSSESSED BY THE AMBIYA (ALAIHIMUS SALAAM)

This, however, does not mean that Allah the Almighty restricts and retains the Knowledge of Unseen exclusively to Himself and does not reveal any part of it to any other person. No, not at all. Allah the Almighty has revealed and honored His apostles as much and as and when He willed, for guidance and enlightenment to cope with the circumstances and situations confronting them viz-a-viz the enemies of Allah, and to fulfill the mission assigned to them. These phenomena have been illustrated at various places in the Holy Quran.

Some of the relevant verses are quoted below:-

- A. Regarding Sayyidinaa Adam (*alaihis salaam*) and the Angels, it is said: **"He (Allah) taught the names (nature and qualitative attributes) of all the things and placed them before the Angels". (Surah Baqarah: Verse 31)**
- B. Regarding Sayyidinaa Da'wud (*alaihis salaam*), it is said, **"He (Allah) gave Da'wud power and wisdom and taught him whatever (else) He willed." (Surah Baqarah: Verse 251)**
- C. In respect of the 'Ilmul Ghaib to Sayyidinaa Sulaiman (*alaihis salaam*), it is said, **"O People! We have been taught the speech of the birds, and on us has been bestowed (a little of) all things." (Surah Namal: Verse 16)**
- D. For Sayyidinaa Lut (*alaihis salaam*), it is said, **"And to Lut We gave Judgment and Wisdom." (Surah Ambiyaa: Verse 74)**
- E. About Sayyidinaa Yaqub (*alaihis salaam*) it was said, **"He was, by Our instructions full of Knowledge (and experience), but most men know not." (Surah Yusuf: Verse 96)**
- F. Sayyidinaa Yaqub (*alaihis salaam*) himself told his sons about this blessing from Allah thus, **"Did I not say to you, I know from Allah that which you know not." (Surah Yusuf: Verse 96)**
- G. About Sayyidinaa Yusuf (*alaihis salaam*), it is said, **"When Yusuf attained his full manhood, We gave him Power and Knowledge; thus do We reward those who do the right things." (Surah Yusuf: Verse 22)**
- H. Regarding Sayyidinaa Musa (*alaihis salaam*), it is said, **"When he reached full age and was firmly established (in life), We bestowed on him Wisdom and Knowledge." (Surah Qasas: Verse 140)**
- I. It is said about Sayyidinaa Khidhr (*alaihis salaam*): **"So they found one of our servants on whom We had bestowed Mercy from Ourselves and whom We had taught knowledge (of special significance) from Our Own**

Presence." (Surah Kah'f: Verse 65)

These verses of the Holy Quran make it clear that Allah the Almighty bestowed the Knowledge of the Unseen (Ghaib) on His chosen servants, but is unfortunate that most people do not know this; on the contrary, even they refuse to believe it without realizing the consequence thereof! These pious souls, at times on their own, disclosed this Divine bestowment in order to convince the people and clear their doubts and put them on the right track of faith and Belief.

- J. For example, Sayyidinaa Isa (*alaihis salaam*) spoke to his followers thus, **"And I declare to you whatever you eat and whatever you store in your houses."** (Surah Ale Imran: Verse 49) (It meant that whatever they had eaten in the houses - within four walls - and whatever they had preserved therein, was well known to the Prophet of Allah.
- K. On another occasion, Sayyidinaa Yusuf (*alaihis salaam*) spoke to his fellow prisoners before telling them the meaning of their dreams. He said, **"Before any food comes to you, I shall surely reveal to you the truth and meaning of this. It is due to the knowledge bestowed upon me by Allah that I have to reveal to you what you did not know."** (Surah Yusuf: Verse 37)

These verses reveal that Allah the Almighty has bestowed 'Ilmul Ghaib to His chosen Apostles. To deny this, amounts to the denial and rejection of the Holy Quran itself. This is not an ordinary or routine knowledge. Elaborate precautionary and protective measures are adopted before such messages relating to the "Unseen" are dispatched. Special angels are sent (on earth) who stay around the Apostles, on whom the Knowledge of the Unseen ('Ilmul Ghaib) is bestowed. (Surah Jinn: Verse 26)

The grant of 'Ilmul Ghaib is admitted by a great honor and whosoever of the Apostles are bestowed this Unique Divine blessing become the holders of great Divine Treasure. However, there is no uniform and set pattern of Divine Message transmitted to each recipient in accordance to their status.

According to the Holy Quran the status and nature of responsible of the Apostles vary from one to another. **"Those Apostles, we bestowed with gifts (endowed with ranks, etc.) as willed by Allah."** (Surah Baqarah: Verse 253)

Likewise the grant of 'Ilmul Ghaib to Prophets varies according to their nature of assignment relating to their prescribed mission.

The story of Sayyidinaa Musa and Khidhr (*alaihimus salaam*) so vividly described in the Holy Quran explains this aspect of the proposition. Sayyidinaa Musa met Khidhr (*alaihimus salaam*) and requested him to enlighten him with the specific knowledge which Allah bestowed on him. Sayyidinaa Khidhr (*alaihis salaam*) accepted, but advised Sayyidinaa Musa (*alaihis salaam*) to be patient and not to utter any word until he would permit him to do so. Whatever Sayyidinaa Khidhr (*alaihis salaam*) did was beyond the understanding of Sayyidinaa Musa (*alaihis salaam*).

The promise of keeping silence on events taking place before his eyes was too much for Sayyidinaa Musa (*alaihis salaam*) to sustain and at last (he broke the silence) Sayyidinaa Khidhr (*alaihis salaam*) revealed the secrets of the events. Sayyidinaa Khidhr (*alaihis salaam*) did not keep him in his company any more. Details of the story is found in the Holy Quran (**Surah Kah'f: Verse 65-82**) This clearly shows that the nature of 'Ilmul Ghaib even to Prophets of Allah was not uniform nor of equal measure.

5. 'ILMUL GHAIB OF THE HOLY PROPHET MUHAMMAD (SALL ALLAHU 'ALAIHI WA AALIHI WA SALLIM)

The Knowledge of the Unseen ('Ilmul Ghaib) was also bestowed upon the Holy Prophet Muhammad (*Sall Allahu 'alaihi wa Aalihi wa sallim*). This 'Ilmul Ghaib was, in essence, the most revealing and surpassing miracle given to the Holy Prophet (*Sall Allahu 'alaihi wa Aalihi wa sallim*).

This miracle, in its totality and persuasiveness, surpassed all miracles given to other Prophets taken together. More or less 124 000 Apostles were raised at different periods of time with some specific knowledge of the hidden realm, i.e. 'Ilmul Ghaib. But the Knowledge of the Unseen bestowed upon the Holy Prophet (*Sall Allahu 'alaihi wa Aalihi wa sallim*) was limitless in scope and magnitude. This is to say that each and every miracle in the nature of 'Ilmul Ghaib given to different Prophets was also given to the Holy Prophet

(Sall Allahu 'alaihi wa Aalihi wa sallim).

The Holy Prophet (*Sall Allahu 'alaihi wa Aalihi wa sallim*) was the epitomic symbol of all the previous Prophets in the past in respect of their qualitative characteristics and quantum of knowledge and spiritual enlightenment. Relating to this bestowment of knowledge and observation upon the Holy Prophet (*Sall Allahu 'alaihi wa Aalihi wa sallim*), the Holy Quran says: "**Allah has sent down to you O Prophet! the Book and Wisdom and taught what you knew not. Great is the Grace of Allah upon you.**" (Surah Nisa: Verse 113) In this virtuous essence the Qur'anic verse asserts that after bestowment of this everlasting treasure of knowledge now there remains no realm of knowledge and enlightenment which is not in the grip of the Holy Prophet (*Sall Allahu 'alaihi wa Aalihi wa sallim*). This is what the Holy Quran describes as the "*Fazl-i-Azim*" (The Great Grace) - whatever the Holy Prophet (*Sall Allahu 'alaihi wa Aalihi wa sallim*) was taught by way of knowledge was taught by Allah the Almighty. (Surah Aala: Verse 6)

If the teacher says to the pupil: I have taught you to read and you knew nothing before this, then he is justified to make this claim and there is nothing derogatory on his part to make such a claim; it cannot be termed as insolence to degrade the student. But if the student says to his teacher, you knew nothing and it was your teacher who gave you knowledge, then though, this logic cannot be denied. Nonetheless, it demonstrates that the student is guilty of insolence and misbehavior towards his teacher. Such an example can hardly be traced in the annals of civilized behavior.

Whatever the Holy Prophet (*Sall Allahu 'alaihi wa Aalihi wa sallim*) knew was through the knowledge bestowed upon him by Allah the Almighty. This being the fact, if before imparting the knowledge through the Holy Quran, Almighty Allah mentioned the state of the Holy Prophet (*Sall Allahu 'alaihi wa Aalihi wa sallim*): "**You knew nothing of the Book nor of the Faith (Imaan).**" (Surah Nur: Verse 63); it is consonance with the Almighty state of Divine Grandeur. It does not at all behoove mortals like us to utter such words in respect of the Holy Prophet (*Sall Allahu 'alaihi wa Aalihi wa sallim*). This would be downright degrading and insulting the high virtuous status of the Holy Prophet (*Sall Allahu 'alaihi wa Aalihi wa sallim*).

The uncontroversial fact remains that Allah the Almighty granted the 'Ilmul Ghaib to the Holy Prophet (*Sall Allahu 'alaihi wa Aalihi wa sallim*) and if

anyone denies and suspects the veracity of this Divine Truth, he is surely guilty of falsehood and diminishing the eminence of Divine Favor. If there be such a one, he ought to be condemned as a blasphemer, worthy of being expelled from the rank and file of Muslimhood. The quality of a true Muslim is that he accepts and believes as true each and every command of Almighty Allah and acts upon it ungrudgingly and unreservedly and induces others to do so.

The Darbar (Court of seat of pre-eminences) of the Holy Prophet (*Sall Allahu 'alaihi wa Aalihi wa sallim*) is a grand Darbar surpassing the grandeur of worldly kings and monarchs. It is an act of misbehavior and misdemeanor even to utter loud words in his august presence; such an act causes the loss of other virtuous deeds of a Believer, forfeiting the Divine Grace. There is a stern warning against those who slip away slyly from his assembly without seeking his permission, this amounts to misbehavior. For them there is stern foreboding of dire punishment on the day of Judgment. It is said: **"Deem not the summons of one Apostle among yourselves, like the summons of one of you to another. Allah doth knows those of you who slip away under shelter of some excuse; then those of you who slip away under shelter of some excuse; then beware those who withstand the Apostle's orders, lest some trial befell them or a grievous penalty be inflicted on them."** (Surah Shura: Verse 52) We can guess what would be the state of awe-inspiring grandeur of the Holy Company graced by the Holy Presence of the Holy Prophet (*Sall Allahu 'alaihi wa Aalihi wa sallim*) where even the slightest misdemeanor is caught up as a misdeed inviting punishment from the providence.

The companions of the Holy Prophet (*Sall Allahu 'alaihi wa Aalihi wa sallim*) used to sit in his presence in due respect holding their breaths and not making any gestures to disturb the dignity of the assembly. They would only utter respectful words like: **"O Prophet of Allah! May my parents be sacrificed at the altar of your dignity."** To every question put to them, their reply used to be, **"Allah and his Prophet (*Sall Allahu 'alaihi wa Aalihi wa sallim*) know better."**

6. THE THREE DIMENSIONS OF THE GHAYB OF THE HOLY PROPHET (SALL ALLAHU 'ALAIHI WA AALIHI WA SALLIM)

In the light of the foregoing evidence it must be admitted that the Holy

Prophet Muhammad (*Sall Allahu 'alaihi wa Aalihi wa sallim*) was endowed with the Knowledge of the Unseen ('Ilmul Ghaib) as a Grace from Allah.

We can examine the issue from three angles.

- A. The Holy Prophet (*Sall Allahu 'alaihi wa Aalihi wa sallim*) was granted this treasure of knowledge directly from the Providence, i.e. without the means of any agency conveying the "knowledge."
- B. Through the revelation of the Holy Quran which is the Treasure-House of all Knowledge operating in the universe.
- C. The Holy Prophet (*Sall Allahu 'alaihi wa Aalihi wa sallim*) was sent as a "Shahid" (Witness), i.e. a person who is in constant touch with the affairs taking place in the world, examining and analyzing them as an observer with an insight to assess and analyze their influence in day-to-day matters. He thus remained ever aware of the God-gifted vigilance possessing full knowledge as an eye-witness, with powers of *Haqq-ul-Yaqeen* and *Ain-ul-Yaqeen* - the faculty of witnessing things with unwavering faith and certitude.

By examining the Holy Prophet's (*Sall Allahu 'alaihi wa Aalihi wa sallim*) Knowledge of the Unseen under the first view-point, viz. the bestowment of 'Ilmul Ghaib directly from Allah the Almighty, we might refer to the following verses of the Holy Quran:-

- A. "These are some of the stories of the Unseen which We have revealed to you, O Prophet!" (Surah Hud: Verse 49)
- B. "Such is one of the stories of what happened Unseen which We revealed by inspiration unto you." (Surah Yusuf: Verse 102)
- C. "The Holy Prophet (*Sall Allahu 'alaihi wa Aalihi wa sallim*) does not withhold grudgingly a knowledge of the Unseen." (Surah Takweer: Verse 24)

Examining the Knowledge of the Unseen of the Holy Prophet (*Sall Allahu 'alaihi wa Aalihi wa sallim*) from the second point of view, the following

verses of the Holy Quran are enough to open our eyes:-

- A. "And We have sent down to you the Book explaining all things, a Guide, a Mercy and Glad Tidings to Muslims." (Surah Nahl: Verse 89)
- B. "The Quran is not a tale invented, but a confirmation of what (went) before it - a detailed exposition of all things." (Surah Yusuf: 111)
- C. "Nothing We have omitted from the Book." (Surah An'am: Verse 38)
- D. "Surely there has come to you from Allah a Light and a Perspicuous Book." (Surah Maida: Verse 15)
- E. "Nor is there ought of the Unseen, in Heaven, or earth but it is recorded in the Clear Book." (Surah Nam'l: Verse 75)
- F. "There is no grain in the darkness (or depth) of the earth, nor anything, fresh or dry, (green or withered), but is inscribed in a record clear." (Surah An'am: Verse 59)

It is seen that in these verses, first there is the mention of the Holy Quran being the Kitab-i-Mubeen - the Book Manifest making everything clear, without even the minutest part remaining under any shadow of doubt or omitted. It is worth observing that the Book manifest contains the mention of all things (with all their attributes), under the sun. Now just imagine what shall be the expanse and depth of the knowledge of the Person on whom the Book was revealed. Surely each and everything mentioned in the Book must have been in full view of the recipient. The phenomena must be pondered over in a most dispassionate and open-minded manner without casting any aspersions over the Divine bestowment on the Holy Prophet (*Sall Allahu 'alaihi wa Aalihi wa sallim*).

Examining the Knowledge of the Unseen possessed by the Holy Prophet (*Sall Allahu 'alaihi wa Aalihi wa sallim*) as a **SHAHID** or witness to all affairs, the following verses carry us to the visionary world of enlightenment where we stand completely wonder-struck at the very idea of the extent of the knowledge which Allah the Almighty revealed to him so as to make him the true representative of Divine rights, not alone on this earth, but even forces of heavenly kingdom operating at the present moment as well as that would

take place in the universe and the Hereafter. It is but essential that we should bow our heads and accept the truth of Divine assertions, and spare ourselves the repercussions, should any shade of wavering creep into our mind and vision. It is beyond our capacity to guess the extent of Knowledge of the Unseen ('Ilmul Ghaib) bestowed upon the Holy Prophet (*Sall Allahu 'alaihi wa Aalihi wa sallim*) by Almighty Allah. Only Allah knows that He has bestowed upon His beloved Prophet (*Sall Allahu 'alaihi wa Aalihi wa sallim*).

- A. "Surely We sent you as a Witness, as a Bringer of Glad Tidings and as a Warner." (Surah Fatah: Verse 8)
- B. "And We shall bring you as a Witness against the people." (Surah Nisa: Verse 41)
- C. "Surely we have sent to you (O men!) an Apostle to be a Witness concerning you." (Surah Muzammil: Verse 15)
- D. "And one day We shall raise from all peoples a Witness against them from among themselves and We shall bring as witness against them from among themselves and We shall bring you as a Witness against them. (Surah Nahl: Verse 89)

From these verses it is clear that on the day of Judgment not only the Holy Prophet (*Sall Allahu 'alaihi wa Aalihi wa sallim*) shall be a Witness over his own Ummah, but shall also testify before Almighty Allah on behalf of the peoples of other Prophets. Now this testimony or evidence can only be given by the person who is an eye-witness to all events and incidents under scrutiny on the Day of Judgment.

This, in other words, means that the Holy Prophet (*Sall Allahu 'alaihi wa Aalihi wa sallim*) is fully informed and kept in touch with all those events which he shall be witness to. Incidentally, this also means that he is keeping watch over our deeds and misdeeds at all times. We should therefore beware of our activities lest any of them displeases or grieves him.

This fact is further corroborated by the (under noted) traditions (Ahadith) of the Holy Prophet (*Sall Allahu 'alaihi wa Aalihi wa sallim*):-

- A. In one tradition it is said: "As I see in front of me, so I see things clearly

behind me." (Muslim Shareef, vol.2, p. 116)

- B. In the second tradition the Holy Prophet (*Sall Allahu 'alaihi wa Aalihi wa sallim*) is reported to have said: "I saw Prophet Musa (*alaihis salaam*) in the valley of Azraq, while passing from Mecca to Madinah. He was reciting Talbiah. On another occasion, I saw Prophet Yunus (*alaihis salaam*) wearing a long woolen overcoat and riding a red camel." (Ibn-i-Majah, pp. 20, 208)
- C. In the third Tradition, the Holy Prophet (*Sall Allahu 'alaihi wa Aalihi wa sallim*) is described witnessing Paradise and Hell. (Muslim Shareef, vol.2, p. 180)
- D. From the fourth Tradition it is learnt that the Holy Prophet (*Sall Allahu 'alaihi wa Aalihi wa sallim*) knows each inmate by name going in the Paradise or in the Hell. (Miskhat Shareef, p. 19)
- E. From the fifth Tradition, it is learnt that when a man enquired from the Holy Prophet (*Sall Allahu 'alaihi wa Aalihi wa sallim*) whether he would go into Jannah or Jahannam, the Holy Prophet (*Sall Allahu 'alaihi wa Aalihi wa sallim*) replied without a moment's pause that, "You shall go to Jahannam." (Bukhari Shareef, vol.3, p. 855)
- F. The sixth Tradition says: "My entire Ummah was presented before me with each individual's scroll of deeds, good as well as bad." (Muslim Shareef, vol. 1, p. 207; Musnad-i-Ahmad; Ibn-e-Maja)
- G. In the seventh Tradition, the Holy Prophet (*Sall Allahu 'alaihi wa Aalihi wa sallim*) said: "One night, my Ummah was presented before me at my Hujrah and I know each of them as clearly as anyone knows his colleague." (Ref: Anba al-Mustafa, p. 19; ref: Tibrani)

At one place in the Holy Quran, it is said: "Does he possess the Knowledge of the Unseen that he sees the dead?" (Surah Najam, Verse 35) It is understood from this verse that only such a person possesses 'Ilmul Ghaib as is capable of seeing things beyond normal reach in terms of time and space. At various places in the Holy Quran, the transcendental power of witnessing things by the Holy Prophet (*Sall Allahu 'alaihi wa Aalihi wa sallim*) has been described.

(Surahs Mujadilah: Verse 7; Surah Ibrahim: Verse 19; Surah Baqarah: Verses 243 & 258; Surah Nur: 41; Surah Fee)l. The truth is that when a Chosen Friend of Allah has seen Allah, nothing remains hidden from him. The Holy Prophet (*Sall Allahu 'alaihi wa Aalihi wa sallim*) said, "I saw Allah the Almighty. He placed His Hand on my back. I felt the coolness in my breast. Within an instance everything became visible clear before me and I recognized everyone." (Tirmizi Shareef; Miskhat Shareef, Karachi, p. 72).

7. THE PROPHET (SALL ALLAHU 'ALAIHI WA AALIHI WA SALLIM) ALSO DISTRIBUTED PORTIONS OF HIS 'ILMUL GHAIB TO HIS SERVANTS

So far we have been discussing the vast expanse and depth of the Holy Prophet's (*Sall Allahu 'alaihi wa Aalihi wa sallim*) knowledge and meditative understanding of the cosmic forces operating in the universe together with the super human forces operating in the universe with super human visual insight of the Unseen as a special gift from the Divine Grace, transcending and surpassing human intellect, unmatched in the entire history of mankind.

We are apt to feel and think if the Holy Prophet (*Sall Allahu 'alaihi wa Aalihi wa sallim*) kept the whole repository of these God-gifted treasures, of the knowledge, particularly relating to the Unseen confined to himself alone or he also, as charitable gesture, passed on some part of it to his devotees who were eager and capable to receive and preserve the rare and priceless beneficence from Almighty Allah.

It is learnt from different Traditions of the Holy Prophet (*Sall Allahu 'alaihi wa Aalihi wa sallim*) that he not only favored his devotees and admirers with this rare and Divine gift, but did so in a greater and open-hearted manner, taught them how communion with Divinity may be maintained and carried forward as the intellect advances and progresses in the realm or history. This is an expression of Divine Dispensation of charity among the fellow beings, the humanity at large for whose benefit the vast universe has been created.

- A. This is what the well-known and famous devoted Companion of the Holy Prophet (*Sall Allahu 'alaihi wa Aalihi wa sallim*) Abu Dharr

Ghaffari (*radi Allahu anhu*) has to say in this respect, "The Holy Prophet (*Sall Allahu 'alaihi wa Aalihi wa sallim*) did not leave this material world without telling us in effect that there is not a single bird flying in the atmosphere about which he left anything unsaid." (Anba al-Mustafa, p. 8 ref: Musnad-i-Ahmad and Tabaqat-i-Ibn- i-Sa'ad)

- B. Another companion, Sayyidinaa Hudhaifa (*radi Allahu anhu*) reports, "Only the Holy Prophet (*Sall Allahu 'alaihi wa Aalihi wa sallim*) stood amongst us (to deliver a sermon) and disclosed before us every detail of events that were to take place that moment onward till the Day of Judgment; he left nothing. Anyone who could retain in his memory remembered it; and the one who forgot it, could not revive it afterwards." (Anba al-Mustafa, p. 7 ref: Bukhari, Muslim and Musnad-i-Ahmad)
- C. It is reported in the Tradition: "The Holy Prophet (*Sall Allahu 'alaihi wa Aalihi wa sallim*) did not leave the world without telling the description of every disrupter (creating disturbance on earth) till the coming of the Day of Resurrection; everything, i.e. his name, his father's name and the name of the tribe or clan to which he belonged." (Miskhat Shareef, Bab al-Fitan)
- D. The Battle of Badr took place on the 17th of Ramadaan. Before the fighting (Jihad) started, the Holy Prophet (*Sall Allahu 'alaihi wa Aalihi wa sallim*) went over the field and disclosed the identity of the enemies of Islam and indicated by placing his hand at different spots and telling "here so and so will be slain." When the battle was over, it was discovered that each and every person about whom the Prophet (*Sall Allahu 'alaihi wa Aalihi wa sallim*) had indicated, was found at the very spot lying dead, neither inch more or less. (Muslim Shareef, Kitab al-Jihad, vol. 2)
- E. There is a lengthy Tradition (Hadith) of the Holy Prophet (*Sall Allahu 'alaihi wa Aalihi wa sallim*) which is an eye-opener for any sceptic who entertained misgivings about the truth of the Holy Prophet's (*Sall Allahu 'alaihi wa Aalihi wa sallim*) Knowledge of the Unseen. It is reported by Sayyidinaa Anas bin Malik (*radi Allahu anhu*), who says:

"After the decline of the sun (noon) the Holy Prophet (*Sall Allahu 'alaihi wa Aalihi wa sallim*) came out of his Hujrah, and led the Dhuhur Prayer. After completing the prayer the Holy Prophet mounted the pulpit and delivered the sermon about the Day of Judgment and the big events that will take place before the advent of the Day. Then addressing the companions he asked them if any one of them had any question to ask from him. He proceeded, 'I swear in the name of Allah, there is nothing that you would ask me and I will not answer it (no query, whatever its nature shall remain unanswered), so long as I am here.'" Sayyidinaa Anas (*radi Allahu anhu*) reports that on hearing this the companions burst in tears, (for it forbode the grave tidings of his leaving the world). But the Holy Prophet (*Sall Allahu 'alaihi wa Aalihi wa sallim*) continued, saying again and again: "Ask me. Ask me (as none after me will tell you)." (Bukhari Shareef, Kitab al-E'tisaam, vol. 3, p. 855)

The following verse of the Holy Quran bears testimony to his truth: "The Holy Prophet (*Sall Allahu 'alaihi wa Aalihi wa sallim*) does not withhold grudgingly a Knowledge of the Unseen." (Surah Takweer: Verse 24) It amounted to saying, "whatever you ask will be answered and whatever you will require, shall be granted."

The insistence of the Holy Prophet (*Sall Allahu 'alaihi wa Aalihi wa sallim*) on oath in the Name of Allah and urging the audience again and again to ask and enquire about anything indicates beyond a shadow of doubt that by the Grace of Almighty Allah, the Holy Prophet (*Sall Allahu 'alaihi wa Aalihi wa sallim*) was endowed with the Knowledge of the Unseen and was extremely generous to satisfy every enquirer in his quest for knowledge including the Unseen.

An Arab Scholar, Shaikh Ahmad bin Muhammad Al-Siddique Al-Ghumari Al-Hasani has written a very learned book entitled "*Motabiqah al-Ikhtia'at al-Asriya*." (Mufti Ahmad Mian Barkati has translated this book in Urdu with the title "*Islam aur Asri Eijadaat*" printed and published at Lahore in 1980). In this book the learned scholar has collected forebodings of the Unseen, which the Holy Prophet (*Sall Allahu 'alaihi wa Aalihi wa sallim*) has disclosed on various occasions. One is explicably amazed and wonderstruck while going through these details how gracefully the Holy Prophet (*Sall Allahu 'alaihi wa Aalihi wa sallim*) was honored by Allah the Almighty about even the minutest details of the Unseen. It appears that the past, the present and

the future lay clear before the Holy Prophet (*Sall Allahu 'alaihi wa Aalihi wa sallim*) like a mirror. Why this should not be so! because the Holy Prophet (*Sall Allahu 'alaihi wa Aalihi wa sallim*) has himself said: **"The keys of the Unseen were brought before me and placed over my hand."** (Bukhari Shareef, p. 848 and Muslim Shareef, vol. 2, p. 116)

Thus the Holy Prophet (*Sall Allahu 'alaihi wa Aalihi wa sallim*) was made the key Bearer (Owner) of the treasures of the earth, (Bukhari and Muslim Shareef) because one who possesses the keys, enjoys the right of possession too. This however does not mean that Allah the Almighty has divested himself of the Divine Powers of the Unseen. On the contrary, it indicates the Absolute Authority and Power of Allah even to bestow any one of His Choice anything as He pleases. It also demonstrates how much Allah has favored and honored the Holy Prophet (*Sall Allahu 'alaihi wa Aalihi wa sallim*)! These are, in fact, the keys with which the hidden meanings and interpretations of the Holy Qur'anic treasures are opened. The Holy Quran as the Divine Book, we all see and recite, but whatever the Prophetic Vision observes behind the contents of words and letters we cannot even imagine and visualize with our limited blurred vision of intellect.

I might refer to but one verse of the Quran: **"Against them make ready your strength to the utmost of your power, including steeds of war, to strike terror into (the hearts of) the enemies of Allah."** (Surah Anfal: Verse 60)

In this verse the word "power" seems to denote nothing in particular, i.e. weapon or means to subdue the enemy, but when the Holy Prophet (*Sall Allahu 'alaihi wa Aalihi wa sallim*) lifts the veil from the word "power" then the human wisdom simply gets perplexed to the extreme, as the real significance, as expressed and stressed by the Holy Prophet (*Sall Allahu 'alaihi wa Aalihi wa sallim*) is definitely beyond the reach of human intellect. Expressing the real significance of the word "power", he said: **"Beware this power is Rami! Beware this power is Rami! Beware this power is Rami!"** (Muslim Shareef, vol. 2, p. 143)

In the Arabic language, the word "Rami" means to throw or strike. One of the important ritual observance during the course of hajj, is to throw small stones at the Satan which ritual is known as "Rami." In this Hadith (Tradition) the Holy Prophet (*Sall Allahu 'alaihi wa Aalihi wa sallim*) meant all such weapons which demand throwing or hurting from a distance at the

enemy. The simplest form of this "throw" is by the hands with as much power as one is capable of, and this power is in the hands of those nations in possession of those weapons, especially firing cannon shells, hurting missiles, rockets or even bombs of any description. All these weapons are thrown at the enemies from a distance and these are the secrets of "power." If you refer to Ahadith (Traditions) you will discover an ocean of the Knowledge of the Unseen spring up from its bottom.

8. CONCLUSIVE FACTS CONCERNING 'ILMUL GHAIB

From what has been discussed with apparent justification and presentable conviction, the following broad basic realities about the Knowledge of the Unseen must be borne in mind to avoid any pitfalls from any biased and intense quarters in this behalf.

- A. This first thing to be noted in this connection is that the "Unseen" is a reality, concrete and irrefutable.
- B. That the "Ilmul Ghaib" or the "Knowledge of the Unseen" belongs exclusively to Allah the Almighty as His Exclusive Divine Prerogative, none having any share in it, or any power to controvert and refute His Exclusive Domain. His knowledge is total.
- C. Allah the Almighty bestows this Knowledge of the Unseen ('Ilmul Ghaib) to his chosen servants.
- D. Allah the Almighty has granted this Knowledge of the Unseen to the Apostles and Prophets.
- E. Allah the Almighty has granted this Knowledge of the Unseen to the Holy Prophet Sayyidinaa Muhammad (*Sall Allahu 'alaihi wa Aalihi wa sallim*).
- F. The Holy Prophet (*Sall Allahu 'alaihi wa Aalihi wa sallim*) bestowed this Knowledge of the Unseen ('Ilmul Ghaib) to his companions who in turn passed this knowledge to the qualified persons who were

entrusted with the mission to propagate the Religion of Allah to succeeding generations.

No doubt, the great poet philosopher of Islam, Allama Iqbal, has aptly summed up the illustrious personality of the Holy Prophet (*Sall Allahu 'alaihi wa Aalihi wa sallim*) in one of his beautiful couplets:

"Lauh bhi tu, Qalam bhi tu, tera wujud Al-Kitab Ghumbad-e-Abgina rang tere muheet mein habab"

"You are O Holy Prophet (Sall Allahu 'alaihi wa Aalihi wa sallim) the Scroll (of human destiny), you are the pen of Divine (with powers) to scribe and delineate the affairs of the universe, you are the personification of the Book of Allah. This vast glassy canopy (the sky) is not more than a bubble in the vast ocean of your August Knowledge."

Courtesy: [Naqshbandiyya Foundation for Islamic Education](http://www.naqshbandiyya.org)