

### Fast 13: Having belief requires knowledge

- As mentioned in Study 12, the passage we have been discussing requires Muslims to believe in three matters:

“...**who believe in** the Unseen and keep up prayer and spend (on good works) out of what We have given them, **and who believe in** what has been revealed to you (O Prophet) and what was revealed before you, and of the Hereafter they are sure.” — ch. 2, v. 3–4

الَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْغَيْبِ وَيُقِيمُونَ الصَّلَاةَ وَمِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ يُنفِقُونَ ﴿٣﴾ وَالَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِمَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْكَ وَمَا أُنزِلَ مِنْ قَبْلِكَ ۗ وَبِالْآخِرَةِ هُمْ يُوقِنُونَ ﴿٤﴾

We will discuss here what the Quran means by “believing”.

- According to many passages in the Quran, to have **belief** requires having **knowledge**.

“Allah will exalt those of you **who believe**, and those **who are given knowledge**, to high ranks.” — ch. 58, v. 11

يَرْفَعُ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مِنْكُمْ وَالَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْعِلْمَ دَرَجَاتٍ

Here knowledge is mentioned as a companion of belief, and those people are exalted by Allah **who possess both belief and knowledge**. Therefore, when the Quran requires us to believe in something, it also requires us to do it on the basis of some knowledge about it. There must be facts and arguments to support what we accept as belief.

- Referring to having belief in the truth of the Quran, the Quran itself says:

“Say: Believe in it or do not believe. Surely those who are given the knowledge before it, fall down prostrate on their faces, when it is recited to them.” — ch. 17, v. 107

قُلْ آمِنُوا بِهِ أَوْ لَا تُؤْمِنُوا إِنَّ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْعِلْمَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِ إِذَا يُتْلَى عَلَيْهِمْ يَخِرُّونَ لِلْأَذْقَانِ سُجَّدًا

The Quran offers man the choice to believe in the Quran or not. It adds that those who have knowledge of the concepts discussed in the Quran, who have knowledge of nature, of human history, of other religions, etc. are the ones who recognize the truth of the beliefs taught in the Quran, so much so that they are emotionally overwhelmed by its recitation. Man acquires knowledge in order to make some sense of this world and he finds satisfaction in it. When such people study the beliefs that the Quran requires us to hold, these appear true to them on the basis of their knowledge. They fall down in submission on hearing it because they have found something fulfilling, which they could not have discovered by their own efforts.

- Similar verses are as follows:

1. “And those who have been given knowledge see that what is revealed to you (O Prophet) from your Lord, is the Truth and it guides into the path of the Mighty, the Praised.” — ch. 34, v. 6

وَيَرَى الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْعِلْمَ الَّذِي أُنزِلَ إِلَيْكَ مِنْ رَبِّكَ  
هُوَ الْحَقُّ وَيَهْدِي إِلَى صِرَاطٍ الْعَزِيزِ الْحَمِيدِ ﴿٦﴾

2. “and that those who have been given knowledge may know that it is the Truth from your Lord, so they should believe in it that their hearts may be lowly before Him. And surely Allah is the Guide of those who believe, into a right path.” — ch. 22, v. 54

وَلِيَعْلَمَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْعِلْمَ أَنَّهُ الْحَقُّ مِنْ رَبِّكَ  
فِيؤْمِنُوا بِهِ فَتُخْبِتَ لَهُ قُلُوبُهُمْ وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ لَهَادِ  
الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ ﴿٥٤﴾

3. “Only those of His servants who possess knowledge fear Allah.” — ch. 35, v. 28

إِنَّمَا يَخْشَى اللَّهَ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ الْعُلَمَاءُ

4. “Rather, it (the Quran) is clear messages in the hearts of those who are granted knowledge.” — ch. 29, v. 49

بَلْ هُوَ آيَاتٌ بَيِّنَاتٌ فِي صُدُورِ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْعِلْمَ

As quotations (1) and (2) above show, it is through knowledge that a person comes to find that what the Quran is conveying is the truth, so much so that belief enters into his heart and he submits to the Supreme Being Who revealed the Quran. True belief and spontaneous submission to it does not come from believing something without thinking, and merely blindly.

Quotation (3) tells us that “fear of Allah” is only truly entertained by those who possess knowledge. It is because they realize out of knowledge that they will suffer if they ignore or go against the guidance sent by God. This verse uses the word *ulama* and can be rendered as: “Only the *ulama* among His servants fear Allah”. Some think that *ulama* here means the persons who are popularly known by this title among the Muslims. Therefore, they make the absurd claim that no Muslim should criticise or find fault with the “*ulama*” because they are the most God-fearing and sincere of all! But the verse refers to those *actually having knowledge*, not those who are given this title by the public. It means that any persons whose behaviour shows that they do not fear Allah cannot be *ulama*, regardless of the titles bestowed on them by people or by some religious seminary.

According to quotation (4), the “clear messages” delivered by the Quran have a resonance in the hearts of those who have knowledge, because those messages fulfil the criteria which the possessors of knowledge apply to determine the truth.

- Twice, the following words occur in the Quran:

“And some people dispute about Allah without knowledge, and without guidance, and without an illuminating Book” — ch. 22, v. 8, ch. 31, v. 20

وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَن يُجَادِلُ فِي اللَّهِ بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ وَلَا هُدًى وَ  
لَا كِتَابٍ مُّبِينٍ

This means that having knowledge is a pre-requisite for those who want to decide which belief about God is true and which is not true. The three things mentioned here, “knowledge”, “guidance” and “an illuminating book”, are all qualities of the Quran. It is a book which illumines the mind, provides guidance, and contains and refers to knowledge. Belief can only be based on these.