

Islam and the Acquisition of Knowledge

Islam dan Perolehan Ilmu

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Abstract

Knowledge is not only learning, but it also encompasses experience. The acquisition of knowledge involves a process of training and education rather than just learning. From the early days of Islam, knowledge has been considered to be the power that is bestowed upon man in order to qualify him to be the vicegerent of Allah on earth (*Khalīfatullāh*). Without knowledge man is not strong enough to fulfill the duties and responsibilities of a vicegerent (*Khalīfah*) to structure his life and his society, as it provides him with values, virtues, visions, beliefs and power. Indeed, knowledge in Islamic worldview is a unique gift from the Creator (the most Omniscience and the only Absolute God) to man. As such, it is vital for the success of man in this world and the Hereafter. Furthermore, it is undeniable fact that, knowledge is the root of man's progress in this transitory world and a crucial factor in his well-being after his demise. Based on the above facts, this humble paper aims to explore vis-a-vis the importance of knowledge acquisition in the view of Islam and to disclose the serious attention that Islam has paid toward acquisition of knowledge. However, to achieve the aims and the objectives of this paper, revelation based approach is applied, that is by referring to the Holy Scripture of Islam (holy *Qur'an*) and its perception on knowledge. Finally, the paper provides a brief conclusion and some recommendations.

Keywords: Knowledge, Islam, Qur'an, Sunnah, Muslim, Social sciences, Natural sciences.

Abstrak

Ilmu pengetahuan bukan sahaja berkaitan pembelajaran, tetapi juga merangkumi pengalaman. Ilmu pengetahuan didapati melalui proses latihan dan pendidikan tidak hanya proses pembelajaran secara rasmi. Sejak bermulanya Islam, ilmu pengetahuan telah dianggap sebagai satu anugerah yang telah diberikan kepada manusia untuk melayakkannya menjadi khalifah di muka bumi ini. Tanpa ilmu pengetahuan manusia tidak berupaya untuk memikul tugas dan tanggungjawab sebagai seorang khalifah dalam mengatur kehidupannya dan masyarakat, ini kerana ia memberi nilai-nilai murni, sifat-sifat kebaikan, aspek kepercayaan dan kekuasaan. Sesungguhnya ilmu pengetahuan menurut perspektif Islam adalah anugerah yang unik yang diberikan oleh Pencipta (Yang Maha Mengetahui dan Maha Esa) kepada manusia. Ia merupakan syarat

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penting dan faktor utama bagi kejayaan manusia di dunia dan akhirat. Berdasarkan fakta yang disebutkan, kertas ini meneroka perihal pentingnya mencari ilmu pengetahuan menurut pandangan Islam dan memberi penekanan pada perkara-perkara penting dalam usaha mendapatkannya. Walau bagaimanapun, untuk mencapai matlamat dan objektif kertas ini, pendekatan berasaskan wahyu diterapkan, iaitu dengan merujuk kepada Kitab Suci Al-Quran (suci Al-Quran) dan persepsinya terhadap ilmu pengetahuan. Kertas ini akhirnya membuat kesimpulan ringkas dan juga memberi beberapa cadangan dan saranan.

Kata Kunci: Ilmu pengetahuan, Islam, Quran, sunnah, orang Islam, Sains sosial, Ilmu alam.

Introduction

Islam is a religion based upon knowledge; it invites its adherents to seek knowledge at all cost. It promotes pursuit of knowledge in all of its forms, and not just Islamic studies, but other fields and sciences as well. Indeed, knowledge is encouraged as a duty, obliging every Muslim to seek after it as long as he lives, and as much as he can, no matter how far his pursuit would take him. And this is highlighted in abound of instances in the *Qur'an* and the Prophet's *Sunnah* for Muslims to heed. As such, the text of the *Qur'an* is replete with verses inviting man to use his intellect, to ponder, to think and to know, in order to discover the truth of this existence. The main purpose and *raison d'être* of acquiring knowledge in Islam is to bring people closer to God and to gain the good of this world, not to destroy it through wastage, arrogance and in the reckless pursuit of higher standards of material comfort. It is not simply for the gratification of the mind or the senses. It is not knowledge for the sake of knowledge or science for the sake of value. Knowledge accordingly must be linked with values and goals. Likewise, it is undeniable fact that knowledge does contribute immensely to the glory and decline of any civilization on earth; because the greatness of past civilization is the manifestations of the power of knowledge; therefore, history is full of many examples where the rise and fall of great civilization coincided with the rise and fall of knowledge. Based on this fact, this paper will apply revelation based approach, verses of the *Qur'an* and some prophetic *Sunnah* to explore the significance of acquiring knowledge in Islamic worldview.

Definition

According to Oxford English Dictionary, knowledge is facts, information and skills acquired by a person through experience or educa-

tion, the theoretical or practical understandings of a subject.¹ Encyclopedia of Britannica defines knowledge as awareness or familiarity gained by experience of a facts or situation.² In short, knowledge is synonymous to awareness, consciousness, realization or perception of information. In simple definition, knowledge is an information, understanding or skills that you get from experience or education or through human intellect and nature. Whereas in Islam, the term used for knowledge in Arabic is “‘*Ilm*”. The most widely used word for education in a formal sense is *ta‘līm*, from the root ‘*alima* (to know, to be aware, to perceive, to learn), which is used to denote knowledge being sought or imparted through instruction and teaching. The word ‘*Ilm*, justifiably pointed out, has a much wider connotation than its synonyms in English and other Western Languages, because knowledge in the Western world means information about something divine or corporeal, while ‘*Ilm* is an all embracing term covering theory, actions and education³. In this regard, Al-Qadhi Abdul Jabbar defines Knowledge as the element that brings peace of mind and strong conviction and belief in a special manner.⁴ However, Imam Ghazālī argued that knowledge in Islam means the realization of things.⁵ It means realization of something in its true nature through different levels of understanding and in agreement with the facts or true nature. Therefore knowledge in this context is totally opposing ignorance or illiteracy. Whereas, Ibn Sina who speaks of knowledge as the understanding or discernment of something (*idrāk al-shay’*), which is actually the reality reflecting or representing itself in the intelligent (*al-mudrik*) which has been constantly observing what it is.⁶ In principle, the reality itself is actually external from the intelligent, i.e. there is a strong relation between the object of knowledge and the person who perceives the object, by applying various tools of understanding.

¹ Della Thomson, “knowledge” Oxford University of Current English, 2nd Edition, Oxford University Press, 1993.

² Encyclopedia Britannica CD, 99th ed, s.v. “knowledge”, Encyclopedia Britannica, Inc 1994-1999.

³ Franz Rosenthal, Knowledge Triumphant: The Concept of Knowledge in Medieval Islam, (U.S.A: Brill Publication, 2006).

⁴ Al Qadhi Abdul Jabbār, *Al-Mughnī fi Abwāb al-Tawhīd Wa al-‘Adl Al-Nazhar wa al-Ma‘arif* (1962, vol.12), 13.

⁵ Al Ghazālī Abū Hamid, *Ihya’ ‘Ulūm al-Dīn*, Book 1: Book of Knowledge (Beirut: Dar al- Ma’rifah, 1982).

⁶ Muhammad ‘Uthman Najati, *Al-Idrāk al-hissi ‘ind Ibn Sina* (Cairo: Dar al-Ma'arif, 1961).

The Significance of Acquisition of Knowledge in Islam

First of all, and foremost, it is important to remember that there is no religion on earth that concerns about knowledge than Islam. Islam is a religion based on knowledge said Safi⁷. As such, the holy book of Islam (*Qur'an*) which is the seal of revelation of Allah has stressed on the importance of knowledge several times in its various chapters and verses. For instance, in the *Qur'an* the word “*alim*” has occurred in 140 places while “*al-‘Ilm*” in 27 times. In all the total number of verses in which “*Ilm*” or its derivatives and associates words are used is 704. The aids of knowledge and its tools such as book, pen, marker etc. amount to almost the same number. *Qalam* occurs in two places, *al-kitāb* in 230 verses. Other words associated with writing occur in 319 verses. This shows that the book and pen are essential to the acquisition of knowledge. For example, the very first revelation sent down to Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) from Allah (SWT) was about seeking knowledge and revealing scientific knowledge. Allah said:

“Proclaim! (or Read in the name of thy Lord and Cherisher, Who created. He created man from clot, Read and thy Lord is the most bounty. He who thought (the use of) the pen, thought man that which he knew not.” (al-Alaq: 1-5).

This is the first message to Prophet Muhammad to be delivered to all mankind. Musa Saleem argued that the word read, teach and pen have been used by Allah (SWT). They are significant elements in the search for knowledge. As a matter of fact, the root words in Arabic for teach, read, and pen have far broader meanings and harmony. These words cannot be translated into English to retain and convey the depth of meaning of the Arabic text. They actually related to deep thinking, conducting research on physical phenomenon, pondering, contemplating, discovering and exploring the physical world.⁸ Hence the early Muslim scholars observed strictly the true meaning of the first revelation of the holy *Qur'an*. As such, their tireless efforts toward knowledge have immensely contributed to the rise of Islamic civilization.

⁷ Louay Safi, *The Foundation of Knowledge* (Kuala Lumpur: IIUM Press, 1996).

⁸ Musa Saleem, *The Muslims and the New World Order* (London: Institute for Strategic and Development Studies, 1993).

The importance of acquiring knowledge is further emphasized in the holy *Qur'an*, when Allah said: "Say: are those equal, those who know and those who do not know?"⁹ Indeed, this verse is in question form which required a very convincing answer. Logically speaking, there is no equality between a knowledgeable person or an intellectual man and illiterate or ignorant person; because knowledge is light, which is able to guide its bearer to the right direction and correct path. Whereas, ignorance is darkness which is incurable disease that can easily mislead a person to the wrong direction. This fact is confirmed by the holy *Qur'an* when Allah stated that "And those who are knowledgeable see that the revelation sent down to you from the Lord is the Truth, and that it guide to the path of Allah who is Exalted and worthy of All praise." Another verse that distinguishes between astute learners and ignorant people is when Allah said "Allah will raise up, to high ranks those of you who believe and who have been granted knowledge...."¹⁰ It means, knowledge is able to elevate the status and position of its bearer and makes difference between him and an ignorant. The above verses and other plenty of verses in the *Qur'an* prove the seriousness of Islam and its scripture about the acquisition of knowledge. Thus, *Qur'an* is worthy to be considered as the book of knowledge.

Further, the Qur'anic terms for knowledge are *'ilm*, *ma'rifat*, *hikmat*, *basīrat*, *ri'ay*, *ẓann*, *yaqīn*, *tadhkirah*, *lubb*, *burhān*, *dirāyat*, *haqq* and *tasawwūr*. On the other hand, the terms that denote lack of knowledge are *jahl*, *rayb*, *shakk*, *ẓann* and *ghalabat al-ẓann*. And grades of knowledge are *'ilm al-yaqīn*, *'ayn al-yaqīn* and *ḥaqq al-yaqīn*. Knowledge is correlated with *imān*, *'aql*, *qalb* and *taqwā*.¹¹ Al-Ghazālī further argues that knowledge must be evidence-based knowledge (*hujjiyyat al-burhān*). The seat of knowledge is the *'aql* and *qalb*. Allah's knowledge is limitless because He is absolute and permanent and he is the sole Creator of the whole universe and creations. As such He is the most Omniscience and the most Omnipotent. Whereas, human knowledge is limited, because he is relative imperfect and temporary being, as such he is in need of the most perfect Being. Perhaps, this fact is relevant to Rene Descartes's *cogito, ergo sum* ("I doubt, therefore I think, and therefore I am"). The concept is also sometimes known as the *cogitos*. Descartes used this concept to prove the existence of God. He stated that,

⁹ Qurān, 39:9.

¹⁰ Qurān, 58:11.

¹¹ Al Ghazālī, *Iḥya Ulūmu al Dīn*.

we human being are skeptical and doubtful being, therefore, we are imperfect.¹²

It means when someone is imperfect, he or she will be curious to know the perfect Being who is absolute; and to know who is doubtful and who is being. So the deep contemplation of human being and by correct reasoning and rationality, he eventually reaches the conclusion of the existent of God whose knowledge is absolute and who is the Uncaused Cause. Indeed, this proposition became a fundamental element of Western philosophy, as it purported to form a secure foundation for knowledge in the face of radical doubt. While other knowledge could be a figment of imagination, deception, or mistake, Descartes asserted that the very act of doubting one's own existence served—at minimum—as proof of the reality of one's own mind; there must be a thinking entity—in this case the self—for there to be a thought. In short, Humans vary in knowledge, because knowledge is public property that cannot be hidden under the carpet nor monopolized by certain quarters. Hence, human, angels, jinn and other living things have varying amounts of knowledge.

Islamic epistemology is *Qur'an*-based within the *tawhidic* paradigm and is guided by objectivity. Knowledge can be absolute such as revealed knowledge. Other types of knowledge are relative. The probabilistic nature of knowledge arises out of limitations of human observation and interpretation of natural and physical phenomena. It is narrated by the *Qur'an* that Adam (a.s.) was the first to learn actively when he was taught the names. “And He taught Adam all the names, then presented them to the angels. He said: Tell Me the names of those if you are right.”¹³ Hence human knowledge after that grew by empirical trial and error or through revelation. Development of language and writing played a big role in knowledge development. Publication and telecommunication have also contributed to the current knowledge revolution.

Likewise, there are numerous authentic *ḥadith* from the prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) on the significance of acquiring knowledge. For example, Imam Bukhārī and Imam Muslim whose books are considered to be the most authentic of six books of *ḥadith*, (*Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Muslim*, *Sunan Abū Dāūd*, *Al-Tirmidhī*, *Sunan Ibn Mājah* and *Sunan al-Nasā'ī*) they both reported the following *ḥadith* of the Messenger of Allah “To seek knowledge is a sacred duty of every Muslim, male or fe-

¹² Watson, Richard A, *Cogito, Ergo Sum: a life of René Descartes* (New York, Public Library Press, 2007).

¹³ Qurān, 2:31.

male.” In another *ḥadith*, it is reported that “He who acquires knowledge acquires a vast portion.” Whereas, according to *ḥadith* reported by Imam al-*Tirmidhī*, the prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) stated that “A servant of God will remain standing on the Day of Judgment until he is questioned about his (time on earth) and how he used it; about his knowledge and how he utilized it; about his wealth and from where he acquired it and in what (activities) he spent it; and about his body and how he used it.”¹⁴

Again, according to al-*Tirmidhī* in the *ḥadith* narrated from Messenger of Allah: “God, His angels and all those in Heavens and on Earth, even ants in their hills and fish in the water, call down blessings on those who instruct others in beneficial knowledge”.¹⁵

And lastly, the Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.) said: “One who treads a path in search of knowledge has his path to Paradise made easy by God...”¹⁶

Hence, the above Qur’anic verses and Prophetic Sunnah have truly proven the concern of Islam about acquisition of knowledge; and there is no doubt that knowledge is a sign of power, because it is capable of elevating the status of its bearers. Meanwhile, having seen the etymology of knowledge and having explored its significance in Islam through *Qur’an* and *Sunnah*, the rational question is: what are the tools or means of acquiring knowledge in Islam? The answer of this question is the next discussion.

Tools and Means of Knowledge Acquisition in Islam

As far as the importance of knowledge acquisition in Islam is concerned, what are the effective methods of acquiring knowledge in Islamic worldview? Is the source of knowledge in Islam equal to the source of knowledge in western worldview? In fact, though this humble paper is not exploring knowledge acquisition in western worldview, however, it is worthwhile and useful to shed some lights on the means of knowledge acquisition in the western worldview. Indeed, for the western modern sciences, it is undeniable fact that, the main sources of acquiring knowledge are human reason, senses and natural phenomenon. As such, science (which is systematic study of physical and natural phenomenon) is the main source of all knowledge according to western worldview; therefore, revelation is marginalized if not totally denied to be the source

¹⁴ Al-*Tirmidhī*, *ḥadith* 148.

¹⁵ Al-*Tirmidhī*, *ḥadith* 422.

¹⁶ *Riyadh us-Saleheen*, 245.

of knowledge. Perhaps this sort of denial of revelation may be attributed to the historical conflict between the church and the human intellect in the dark age and before the age of enlightenment. However, in Islam, the primary source of knowledge are revelation (*Qur'an* and prophetic *Sunnah*), followed by human reason senses and nature. It follows that source of knowledge in Islam is very comprehensive, integrative and holistic. It means Islam believes that revelation, which according to Oxford Dictionary of Current English, (is the act or process of disclosing something previously secret or obscure, especially something true), is very important to the field of knowledge; because revelation is a fact disclosed or revealed, especially in a dramatic or surprising way, which is able to work together with human intellect to produce authentic truth of our universe.¹⁷

Thus, revelation with particular reference to *al-Qur'an* is authentic primary source of knowledge acquisition in Islam. It deals with all human affairs from cradle to death; as it comprises all human needs and knowledge. In light of the above argument, Imam al-Ghazālī argues that all knowledge is from *Allah*. As such, human can only attain it in a passive way through revelations or in an active way by empirical observation and experimentation. Whatever knowledge they get is ultimately from *Allah*. Knowledge might be innate or acquired. Human have knowledge of the Creator even before birth. Some human knowledge is instinctive. Most human knowledge is learned by observation (*'Ilm tajribī*), transmission (*'Ilm naqlī*) or analysis and understanding (*'Ilm 'aqlī*). Seeking to know is an inner human need that satisfies curiosity. Revelation (*Wahy*), inference (*'aql*), and empirical observation of the universe (*kaūn*) are major sources of acquired knowledge accepted by believers. In terms of quantity, empirical knowledge comes first, whereas in terms of quality revealed knowledge will surely be the first. However, there is a close interaction and interdependence between revelation, inference, and empirical observation. As such “*'aql* is needed to understand *wahy* and reach conclusion from empirical observation. *Wahy* protects *'aql* from mistake and provides it with information about the unseen and metaphysical matters.”¹⁸

Concerning the holy *Qur'an*, Zakir Naik argued that, the *Qur'an* is a book believed by Muslims to be of completely divine origin. As such, the *Qur'an* is the pure speech of Allah, exposition of all things. The

¹⁷ Thomson, “knowledge” Oxford University of Current English.

¹⁸ Al Ghazālī, *Ihyā' 'Ulum al-Dīn*.

speech of Allah, sent down upon the last Prophet Muhammad, through the Angel Gabriel, in its precise meaning and concise wording, transmitted to us by numerous persons (*tawātūr*), both verbally and in writing¹⁹. It means the holy *Qur'an* is the last revelation of God after the Torah and Bible respectively. In this regard, Daniel stated that Muslim have been justifiably proud that their scripture has remained so timeless and changeless. Indeed, the consistency of the text is sometimes offered as evidence to support Muslim claims that the *Qur'an* is inimitable, unequalled among scriptures. There is some merit to the claim, and the *Qur'an* itself supports it²⁰. According to the holy *Qur'an*, "Say: If men and jinn should combine together to bring the like of this *Qur'an*, they could not bring the like of it, though some of them were aiders of others."²¹

It is important to mention here that the original language of the holy *Qur'an* is Arabic and the word '*Qur'an*' in Arabic is derived from the root *qara'a*, which has various meanings, such as to read, "Or thou have a house of gold, or thou ascend into heaven."²² "And we will not believe in thy ascending till thou bring down to us a book we can read. Say: Glory to my Lord! Am I aught but a mortal messenger?"²³ *Qur'an* is a verbal noun and hence it means the 'Reading' or 'Recitation'. As used in the *Qur'an* itself, the word refers to the revelation from Allah in the broad sense, "And We reveal of the *Qur'an* that which is a healing and a mercy to the believers, and it adds only to the perdition of the wrongdoers."²⁴ Furthermore, it is not always restricted to the written form in the shape of a book, as we have it before us today. However, it means revelation to Muhammad only, while revelation to other prophets has been referred to by different names (e.g. *taurat*, *Injil*, *Zabur*, etc.). The revelation from Allah to the Prophet Muhammad is referred to in the *Qur'an* itself by the name *Qur'an* (recitation) as well as by other names, such as *Furqān* which means criterion or the discrimination, "Blessed is He Who sent down the Discrimination upon His servant that he might be a warner

¹⁹ Zakir Naik, *Qurān and Modern Science: Compatible or Incompatible* (Delhi: Farīd Enterprises, 2007).

²⁰ Daniel W Brown, *A New Introduction to Islam* (UK London: 2nd Edition, Wiley-Blackwell Publication, Dar al-Taqwa, 2009).

²¹ Qurān, 17:88.

²² W Brown, *A new Introduction to Islam*.

²³ Qurān, 17: 93.

²⁴ Qurān, 17: 82.

to the nations;”²⁵ *Tanzīl* which means sent down, “And surely this is a revelation sent down from the Lord of the worlds;”²⁶ *Dhikr* which is translated as reminder, “Surely We have revealed the Reminder, and surely We are its Guardian.”²⁷ *Qur'an* is also called the *Kitāb* which means scripture, “Certainly We have revealed to you a Book which will give you eminence. Do you not then understand?”²⁸ Other various references to the *Qur'an* are made by such words as *Nūr* (light), *Hudā* (guidance), *Rahmān* (mercy), *Majīd* (glorious), *Mubārak* (blessed), *Bashīr* (announcer), *Nadhīr* (warner), and etc. All these names reflect one of the various aspects of the revealed word of Allah. Therefore, this holy book deserves to be the primary source of knowledge in Islam. Meanwhile, human reason which represents the human intellectual faculty, argued Davutoglu, that processes a variety of information as premises to draw conclusions thereupon, has been given a serious attention by Islam and *Qur'an* alike.²⁹ As such, Islam and its holy book did not ignore the importance of this human faculty in acquisition of knowledge. They jointly continue to encourage people to exercise their intellect in order to discover more truth about the physical world. In this juncture, we ought to evaluate some *Qur'anic* messages on the importance of human reason in gaining various knowledge.

According to the holy *Qur'an*, “Surely the worst of beasts in God's sight are those that are deaf and dumb and do not reason”.³⁰ “And it is not for a soul to believe except by permission of Allah, and He will place defilement upon those who will not use reason.”³¹ “And if you obey most of those in the earth, they will lead you astray from Allah's way; they follow but conjecture and they do but guess.”³² “And do not pursue that of which you have no knowledge....”³³ “And when it is said to them: ‘Follow what God has sent down’, they say, ‘No; but we will follow such things as we found our fathers doing.’ What Even if their fa-

²⁵ Qurān, 25: 1.

²⁶ Qurān, 26: 192.

²⁷ Qurān, 5: 9.

²⁸ Qurān, 21:10.

²⁹ Davutoglu A., *Civilizational Transformation and the Muslim World* (Kuala Lumpur: Mahir Publications, 1994).

³⁰ Qurān, 8:22.

³¹ Qurān, 10:100.

³² Qurān, 6:116.

³³ Qurān, 17:36.

thers had no understanding of anything and if they were not guided?"³⁴ Obviously, the above *Qur'anic* verses and many other verses prove the importance of human reason and its ability to discover the truth and reality of this world. It implies that *Qur'an* and human reason can work together and they are able to be integrated. Hence, there should not be any conflict between the both sources of knowledge, because the right reason depends on revelation for correct guidance, and good understanding of revelation should also depend on logical reasoning. With regard to human senses and natural phenomenon, they are considered to be important sources of knowledge acquisition in the view of Islam. Thus, the sources of knowledge acquisition in Islam are very comprehensive and holistic. Yet, as far as knowledge acquisition is concerned, what kind of knowledge can we gain from the holy *Qur'an*?

Types of Knowledge in the Qur'an: Social and Natural Sciences

First of all, the *Qur'an* as the seal of revelation of God declares that it is an exposition for all things (*Tibyān li kulli shay*) as guidance and mercy, in which nothing is neglected.³⁵ The inclusion of various branches of knowledge in the Holy *Qur'an* is an example of its comprehensiveness. Though, some may argue that the holy book of *Qur'an* is not a book of social sciences, yet, in the matter of fact, there are some hints argued, *Ilyās*, that link to social affairs and natural sciences.³⁶ Being a book of knowledge and being the final revelation of Allah, the holy *Qur'an* has directly or indirectly discussed various issues in the field of social sciences and natural sciences since 1400 years ago. For example, the issue of economics, usury, loan, transaction, measure and weight is already discussed by the *Qur'an*. As such, *Qur'an* provides guidance to attain and maintain economic justice, and sets some norms and principles of economics as argued Khan along with some restrictions to ensure the observance of those norms and principles, with particular reference to prohibition of *Ribā*, uncertain contracts, illegal transaction, and etc.³⁷ The *Qur'an* has dealt with these issues comprehensively,³⁸ and it also con-

³⁴ Qurān, 2:170.

³⁵ Qurān, 16:89.

³⁶ *Ilyās M, The Unity of Science and Religion*, (Kuala Lumpur: A.S. Noordeen, 2002).

³⁷ Maulana Wahiddudin Khan, *Religion and Science* (New Delhi: Al-Risala Books, 1988).

³⁸ Qurān, Usury: (2:275-281); Loan: (2:282); Measure and weight: (11:85); Judiciary: (5:42), and Politics: (3:159).

tains truth on history (history of nations and prophets). Moreover, knowledge about natural sciences are not ignored by the *Qur'an*, especially, knowledge of astronomy, embryology, and etc. Indeed, the aim of *Qur'an* is to provide guidelines and principles and leave it to mankind to explore and exercise his intellect to justify the sayings of Almighty Allah the most Omnipotent and the most Omniscience.

Conclusion

Knowledge is important and essential for all human being; because it is a sign of power, and it enables man to understand the nature, to know God as the most Omnipotent and the most Omniscience. Knowledge can be innate or acquired. It can be 'aqlī and naqlī. It can be physical knowledge (*ʿIlm al-shahādāt*) and metaphysical knowledge (*ʿIlm al-ghayb*). In the most serious note, sciences either natural, social or religious sciences are interrelated or none of them can exclude the other, as such, they are able to unite to produce true understanding of this world and the causes behind its existence. As far as the topic of this humble paper is concerned, Islam perceives acquisition of knowledge as noble duty and a requirement for the fulfillment of man's obligation as a vicegerent of God (*Khalīfatullāh*) on earth. Therefore, the first revelation on Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.) was not about seeking wealth nor about searching for luxurious and opulent life, but it was exclusively based on acquisition of knowledge; knowledge that will benefit man in this life and in the hereafter. Thus, knowledge has been at the center of the Islamic worldview from the outset. The *Qur'an* recognizes multiple sources of knowledge amongst which the following are particularly important; revelation, sense perception, history, reasoning and intuition. Revelation is God-given knowledge which Muslims believe is enshrined in the *Qur'an*, the highest source of knowledge and authority in Islam. Sense perception is knowledge gained through one's senses. Referring to the *Qur'an's* empirical attitude reflected in its emphasis on the observable aspects of reality, in this regard a gigantic scholar from sub-Indian continent (Iqbal) stated that nature, described by the *Qur'an* as a sign of God, stands in the same relation to God as character does to the human self. Based on above study, this humble paper would conclude that, Islam is a religion based upon knowledge; it pays a serious attention on the acquisition of knowledge. This fact is obvious through its scripture (*Qur'an*) which repeatedly call people to seek knowledge in order to realize the truth of the existence at macrocosmic or microcosmic level. It is also undeniable fact, that knowledge is the key of achieving high level of civilization. As such

the responsibility rests on Muslim parents, community, scholars and religious leaders to emphasize the importance of education and acquisition of knowledge to all members of the society. As far as acquisition of knowledge in Islam is important, a strong mutual beneficial reciprocal relation between Muslim leaders and Muslim Scholars is urgent. Muslim governments ought to invest hugely on education, and they should encourage the scholars to involve in various researches in different branches of knowledge. Muslims should also be reminded that the purpose of acquiring knowledge in Islam, is not only to be able to earn a lawful living, but also to use it for the benefit of mankind, to eradicate suffering and poverty, to educate others, to learn to distinguish between right and wrong, or to differentiate between good and bad, to be a good Muslim that will serve Allah and His creations, and most importantly, to gain the pleasure of Allah.

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