

Chapter: 9

أُمِّي عَالِمٌ

The meaning of **أُمِّي** often taken as "**illiterate**". But in the Holy Quran, we find this word connected with the Prophet, i.e. "**النَّبِيِّ الْأُمِّيِّ**". In Arabic, when alphabets **الف لام** come before a word, it becomes specific. In fact, this word is derived from the word "**أُمٌّ**" which has a meaning of "**Original**". So the Prophet Muhammad is the special human being who was born and remained true to his **original nature**. One of the blessed names of the Noble Prophet (PBUH) is **عَالِمٌ** (**person with special knowledge**). If the meaning of **أُمِّي** is taken as illiterate, then these two names become contradictory to each other and it is impossible for them to be combined in one person with the same intensity. Therefore, the meaning of the name **أُمِّي** of the Prophet comes out to be "**Original**". Some say that this word is from **أُمُّ الْقُرَى**, means belonging to Makkah. The Almighty God says in the Quran that:

فَأْمِنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ النَّبِيِّ الْأُمِّيِّ

{Therefore believe in Allah and His Noble Messenger who attains the glory of being untutored (07:158)}

What is this **Glory of being untutored** (شان امیت)? The Noble Prophet (PBUH) is a person who has not read from anyone other than Allah Almighty, and knows more than all human beings. He is the student of Allah. He is the beneficiary of His teachings. He believes in His teachings

and follows His commands only. If there was a man in the world who was his teacher, then he would be having superiority over him. And this situation would have never been acceptable to Allah for His Messenger. At the end of the above mentioned Verse of Quran, Allah says for him:

الَّذِي يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَكَلِمَاتِهِ وَاتَّبَعُوهُ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَهْتَدُونَ

{(The Prophet) who believes in Allah and His Words, obey him so that you may be guided (07:158)}

کیا شان ہے اس کی کہ جو **امی** لقبی ہے

وہ میرا نبی، میرا نبی، میرا نبی ہے

{What is his wonder that he got the title of **Untutored**
He is my Prophet, my Prophet, my Prophet}

Knowledge is the name of knowing something in its reality. Knowledge is a vast ocean. No one can claim to have acquired complete knowledge. The expression of ignorance is the distinctiveness of knowledge. The people of knowledge and wisdom say that beware of the ignorant who consider himself wise. However, when a seeker of knowledge knows something, he can definitely be called a "**scholar**".

The first lesson given to the Noble Prophet (PBUH) in the Cave of Hira was related to the "**knowledge**". It is as if Muhammad Mustafa (PBUH) had the honor of being the first student in Islam and his teacher became the Creator of the Universe Himself. Here, it should be borne in mind that the **level of knowledge of the Prophet** is far higher than all the levels of knowledge of the whole universe. Above it, is the "**Knowledge of Divinity**", the outline of which cannot even come to the mind of human being. God says:

وَمَا أَوْتِيْتُمْ مِّنَ الْعِلْمِ إِلَّا قَلِيْلًا

{(O Prophet!) And you have not received knowledge except a little (17:85)}

Therefore, it is clear in mind that the "**Knowledge of God**" and the "**Knowledge of Prophet**" cannot be equal. All the knowledge that the Prophet has, is given by the

Almighty God. But it is also important to understand that where the limit of knowledge of the common man ends, the level of knowledge of Prophethood begins. In this issue, the "**Knowledge of Unseen**" also comes. The "**Absolute Unseen**" has no one but Allah, rather nothing is unseen from Him. However, **Partial Unseen** is given to Prophets. A Knowledge of Unseen has been acquired by every Muslim as well through the Messenger of Allah (PBUH). Such as: Allah, His Angels, the Heavenly Books, the Prophets, the Day of Judgment, Heaven and Hell. Every Muslim should have such knowledge with full conviction, otherwise how come he be called a Muslim? Yes, there is an unseen that is called **Added Unseen**. This is that unseen which may be for one person but not for another. Like America, which I have not seen, it is unseen to me, but not to the one who lives there.

As has been said, where the limit of man's knowledge ends the boundary of Divine Revelation begins. Such knowledge is the Gift from Allah. This endowment is reserved for His Prophets and Apostles only. The common man cannot even imagine access to this knowledge. The door of Divine Revelation has been closed for ever after the Last Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), and will remain closed till the Day of Hereafter. From now on, the light of the knowledge and gnosis (عرفان) will be taken forever following the excellent example (اسوة حسنه) of the Noble Prophet (PBUH).

The information of the sayings and deeds of the Holy Prophet is hadith and its collected works. The task of compiling, memorizing and transcribing the hadiths began during the Prophet's time, but the concrete work of compilation and recording all the hadiths began in the eighth century AD, some two hundred years after the

Prophet's moment. During this period many nice compilations were made simultaneously. They are called "Sihah Sitta" meaning "Six Authoritative Books". The thousands of instructions contained in them show Prophet's knowledge and its vastness. All these sayings of the Prophet have the status of command for us.

What the Noble Prophet has taught prominently to the human race is the concept of **Oneness of God**. Then there is the concept of **Prophethood** and the belief in all the previous prophets. And then there is the special concept of **Hereafter** as well. In addition, unity and equality among human beings, discrimination of color, race, family, language, region and homeland has to be eliminated. It is also worth noting that our Noble Prophet (PBUH) had shown to us by acting himself on all these things.

The Noble Prophet (PBUH) on several occasions has emphasized the Ummah to acquire knowledge and wisdom. Some of his sayings are placed hereunder:

- "Seeking knowledge is obligatory on every Muslim man and woman". (Sunan Ibn Majah)
- "Get knowledge even if you have to go to China. Of course, acquiring knowledge is the duty of every Muslim". (Reference: جامع بيان العلم وفضله , 1: 7)
- It is narrated by Hazrat Abu Umama that the Prophet (PBUH) said: "The superiority of a scholar over a worshiper is like my superiority over a lowery person among you, and then he said: Allah and His Angels and even ants and sea fishes are also praying for good to those who teach knowledge". (Jami al-Tirmizi)
- It is narrated by Hazrat Anas that the Prophet (PBUH) said: "Whoever goes out in search of knowledge is

like a Jihad on the way of Allah until he returns to his homeland".

The philosophy of the teachings of the Noble Prophet (PBUH) is in fact the training and character building of humanity. Training is not possible without education, and training cannot be fully effective without education. Reforming society is a religious duty and education is its basis and roots.

In many places in the Holy Quran, believers are commanded to acquire knowledge. This includes religious knowledge as well as worldly knowledge. Today, what we call Science and Technology, particular attention has also been paid to its acquisition. Quran says:

■ لَايَاتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ يَعْقِلُونَ

{Indeed in this are many signs of (God's Nature) for people of intellect
(02:164, 13:034, 16:12, 30:24)}

■ وَيُرِيكُمْ آيَاتِهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَعْقِلُونَ

{And shows you His signs so that you may understand (02:73)}

■ أَفَلَا يَتَدَبَّرُونَ الْقُرْآنَ

{So do they not ponder about the Quran? (04:82 and 47:24)}

As such, the Holy Quran has repeatedly called attention to acquire knowledge and contemplation. But remember that knowledge is useless without action. Thus, Allamah Iqbal, the poet of the East, has given us the following message:

عمل سے زندگی بنتی ہے جنت بھی جہنم بھی
یہ خاکی اپنی فطرت میں نہ نوری ہے نہ ندی ہے

{ The deeds makes life for both Heaven and Hell
The man in its nature is neither made up of light nor of fire }