

# ALI 295: The Nature of Knowledge in Shi'i Narrations

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# The Importance of Seeking Knowledge

- ◆ “Seek knowledge even if you have to go to China.”
- ◆ “Seeking knowledge is a *faridha* for every believing man and woman.”
- ◆ “The sleep of the learned man is greater than the worship of the ignorant man.”



# The Importance of Seeking Knowledge (2)

- When Allah (swt) speaks to the Prophet (68:4), he tells him: وَإِنَّكَ لَعَلَىٰ خُلُقٍ عَظِيمٍ
- But in another verse (20:114), the Holy Prophet is ordered: وَقُلْ رَبِّ زِدْنِي عِلْمًا



# How is Knowledge Defined?

- ◆ Epistemology: the branch of philosophy which seeks the nature, sources and modes of knowledge
- ◆ Is the Islamic definition of knowledge different from others?
- ◆ Knowledge is that which leads us to fulfilling our purpose on the earth, or that which takes us closer to “knowing Allah (swt).”
- ◆ اول الدين معرفته



# How is Knowledge Defined (2)?

- In a narration, anything other than knowledge of God is فضل
- We recite in a supplication; اللهم اني اعوذ بك من علم لا ينفع



# What are the Sources of Knowledge?

- ◆ THE QUR'AN AND AHLUL BAYT ARE THE ONLY PURE SOURCES WHICH TAKE US TO PURE, CLEAR UNDERSTANDING
  - ◆ ALLAH (SWT) SAYS IN THE HOLY QUR'AN: لَا يَمَسُّهُ إِلَّا الْمُطَهَّرُونَ "NO ONE CAN TOUCH IT (THE QUR'AN) EXCEPT FOR THE PURIFIED ONES"
  - ◆ IMAM ALI SAYS IN A NARRATION THAT AHLUL BAYT ARE عيش العلم و موت الجهل



# The Sources of Knowledge (2)

- ◆ Imam Baqir (as) says, “Search to the east and the west and you will never find correct knowledge except that which has left this house!”
- ◆ The Prophet says, “I am the city of knowledge, and Ali is its gate.”
- ◆ Abu Hanifa says, “If it were not for the two years (with Imam Sadiq), I would have perished...”



# The Hadith of Unwan al-Basri

- ◆ Narrated in Bihar al-Anwar
- ◆ He was a 94 year old student of Malik bin Anas
- ◆ Desired to seek knowledge from Imam Sadiq (a)



# The Hadith of Unwan al-Basri (2)

- The Imam tells him; العلم نور يقذفه الله في قلب لمن يشاء
- Imam Sadiq's advices in seeking knowledge:
  1. Knowledge is attained through عبودية
  2. Seek knowledge through practice
  3. Ask God to grant you knowledge