

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

And With Him Are The keys Of The Invisible  
None But He Knoweth Them.  
(Inaam, 59)



THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE  
**UNSEEN**  
English Version of the Urdu Treatise  
"ILM-I-GHAYB"

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M. A., Ph. D., Gold Medalist

Translated by  
Prof. Azimi F. M. Shaikh

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# THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE UNSEEN

ENGLISH VERSION OF THE URDU  
TREATISE

*"ILM-I-GHAYB"*

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# THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE UNSEEN

## "'ILM - I - GHAYB"

### (1)

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 directions 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 Qur'an — The Most Accomplished and the Final Revealed divine book has laid great Stress on the acquisition of Knowledge and its 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 Qur'an Proclaim in an unambiguous manner that the acquisition of knowledge is the most fundamental pre-requisite for survival and development of existence (*W'AJUD*) in all its Pervasive Sense.

Says the Holy Qur'an : 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).<sup>1</sup> At another place it is said : O my Lord! Advance me in knowledge.<sup>2</sup> 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 Qur'an is the 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 life advances from stage to stage. Similarly references to 'book' and 'writing' are at more than 600 places in the Holy Qur'an. This clearly indicates the divine emphasis on knowledge and its acquisition at all levels of life. In a tradition (Hadith) The Holy Prophet (Allah's Grace and peace be upon him) has said: I have been raised as a teacher and an accomplisher of (refined) manners.<sup>3</sup> The Holy Prophet (Allah's grace and peace be upon him) 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<sup>4</sup>. Hazrat Ali (may Allah brighten belongs his countenance) has said: The real dignity to men learning alone. The Holly Qur'an itself bears testimony to the significance of knowledge when it Says that it was on account of his knowledge that Almighty Allah chose Hazrat Talut, as the king of the Bani Israel. "Allah hath gifted Talut with Knowledge and bodily prowess";<sup>5</sup> . The superiority of Hazrat Adam — the epitomic symbol of human progeny — over angels (and all the creations) was on account of this knowledge alone.<sup>6</sup>

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 Viceregent of Allah on earth.

## (2)

In its abstract sense, there are two kinds of knowledge (or learning): the one which is taught in Madrasahs, schools, colleges and universities (in the progressive order). For a lay-man as well 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, without the functional audio-visual aids, (such as books, papers, pens or suchlike 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 the Quranic terminology is known as *'Ilm-i-Ghayb* or the "Knowledge of the Unseen"<sup>7</sup> and which constitutes one of the fundamental tenets of Islamic Belief. In fact, the belief and unbelief in the Unseen (*Ghayb*) is the distinguishing mark of a person being a Muslim or a Heathen<sup>8</sup>. 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. This — the knowledge of the Unseen (*'Ilm-i-Ghayb*) is superior to and dominant over all other knowledges in any field of human activity, defying all methods of imparting and receiving education or 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)

There are many verses in the Holy Qur'an in which there is mentioned or reference to *'Ilm-i-Ghayb* (The knowledge of Unseen). It is clear from these verses that this *'Ilm-i-Ghayb* pertain and belong to Almighty Allah alone. The following verses of the Holy Qur'an corroborate this proposition.

- (i) "With Him are the Keys of the Unseen; the treasure that none knows but He."<sup>9</sup>
- (ii) "I know the secrets of heaven and earth".<sup>10</sup>
- (iii) "Say O Prophet (Allah's Grace and peace be upon him)! The Unseen is for Allah".<sup>11</sup>
- (iv) "The Holy Prophet (Allah's grace and peace be upon him) is asked to declare: say, I tell you not that the treasures of AL-LAH are with me, nor do I know on my own, what is hidden (In the Unseen)".<sup>12</sup>

From these verses it is learnt that the Knowledge of unseen (*'Ilm-i-Ghayb*) belongs as His most exclusive supreme prerogative to Allah to Almighty. None on his own, can know the unseen (ghayb) unless bestowed by Allah the almighty as a grace (and not as a matter of right of claim) — A little probe into these verses would reveal that while even the minutest part of the ghayb remains in the divine authority, it is not to be said any where that Allah the Almighty does not grant this knowledge even to any one among his servants nor that the treasure of the ghayb remain un-bestowed and unshared by any one else. This is 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 *Ilm-e-ghayb*. This point is stressed again and again in the Holy Qur'an.

- (i) "He (Allah the Almighty) alone is the Knower of the unseen: He does not make any one acquainted with the mysteries except the apostle whom He has chosen".<sup>13</sup>
- (ii) "Allah will not disclose to you the secret of the unknown, but He chooses of his apostles whom He pleases".<sup>14</sup>

### (4)

This, however, does not mean that Allah, the Almighty restricts and retains the knowledge of the 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 honoured 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 Qur'an. Some of the relevant verses are quoted below.

- (1) Regarding Hazrat Adam and the Angels, it is said:- "He (Allah) taught the names (nature and qualitative attributes) of all the things and placed them before the angles".<sup>15</sup>
- (2) Regarding Hazrat Da'ud it is said:- "He (Allah) gave Da'ud power and wisdom and taught him whatever (else) He willed".<sup>16</sup>
- (3) In respect of the *'Ilm-i-Ghayb* to Hazrat Suleman, it is said: Hazrat Suleman said, "O People! We have been taught the speech of the birds, and on us has been bestowed (a little of) all things."<sup>17</sup>
- (4) For Hazrat Lut it is said: "And to Lut We gave Judgment and wisdom".<sup>18</sup>
- (5) About Hazrat Yaqub (Jacob) it is said: "He was, by Our instructions full of knowledge (and experience) but most of men know not."<sup>19</sup>
- (6) Hazrat Yaqub 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".<sup>19</sup>
- (7) About Hazrat Yusuf it is said: "When Yusuf attained his full manhood, We gave him power and knowledge; thus do We reward those who do right things".<sup>20</sup>
- (8) Regarding Hazrat Musa it is said: "When he reached full age and was firmly established (in life), We bestowed on him wisdom and knowledge".<sup>21</sup>
- (9) It is said about Hazrat Khizr: "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."<sup>22</sup>

These verses of the Holy Qur'an make it clear that Allah the Almighty bestowed the knowledge of the Unseen (Ghayb) on His chosen servants, but it is a misfortune that most people do not know this; on the contrary even they refuse to believe it, without realising 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.

- (10) For example Hazrat Issa spoke to his followers thus: "And I declare to you whatever you eat and whatever you store in your houses".<sup>23</sup> (It meant that what ever they had eaten in the

houses (within four walls) and whatever they had preserved therein, was all known to the Prophet of Allah.)

- (11) On another occasion, Hazrat Yusuf, 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 been to reveal to you what you did not know."<sup>24</sup>

These verses reveal that Allah the Almighty has bestowed *Ilm-e-ghayb* to His chosen Apostles. To deny this amounts to the denial and rejection of the Holy Qur'an itself. This is not an ordinary or routine knowledge. Elaborate precautionary and protective measures are adopted before such messages relating to the 'Unseen' are despatched. Special angels are sent (on earth) who stay around the Apostles, on whom the knowledge of the unseen (*Ilm-i-Ghayb*) is bestowed.<sup>25</sup>

The grant of *Ilm-i-Ghayb* is admitted by a great honour 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 with their status.

According to the Holy Qur'an the status and the 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<sup>26</sup>. Likewise the grant of *Ilm-i-Ghayb* to Prophets varies according to their nature of assignment relating to their prescribed mission. The story of Hazrat Musa and Khizr, so vividly described in the Holy Qur'an, explains this aspect of the proposition. Hazrat Musa met Khiz'r and requested him to enlighten him with the specific knowledge which Allah had bestowed on him. Hazrat Khizr accepted but advised Hazrat Musa to be patient and not to utter any word until he would permit him to do so. What ever Hazrat Khizr did was beyond the understanding of Hazrat Musa.

The promise of keeping silence on events taking place before his eyes was too much for Hazrat Musa to sustain and at last (he broke the silence). Hazrat Khizr revealed the secret of the events. Hazrat Khizr did not keep him in his company any more. Details of the story is found in the Holy Qur'an.<sup>27</sup> This clearly shows that the nature of the *Ilm-i-Ghayb* even to prophets of Allah was not uniform nor of equal measure.

## (5)

The knowledge of the Unseen (*'Ilm-i-Ghayb*) was also bestowed upon the Holy Prophet (Allah's Grace and peace be upon him). This *'Ilm-i-Ghayb* was, in essence, the most revealing and surpassing miracle given to the Holy Prophet (Allah's grace and peace be upon him). 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. *'Ilm-i-Ghayb*. But the knowledge of the unseen bestowed upon, the Holy Prophet (Allah's grace and peace be upon him) was limitless in scope and magnitude. This is to say that each and every miracle in the nature of *'Ilm-i-Ghayb* given to different Prophets was also given to the Holy Prophet (Allah's grace and peace be upon him). The Holy Prophet (Allah's grace and peace be upon him) 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 (Allah's grace and peace be upon him), the Holy Qur'an says: "Allah has sent down to you O Prophet! (Allah's grace and peace be upon him) the Book and Wisdom and taught what you knew not. Great is grace of Allah unto you".<sup>28</sup> In its 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 (Allah's grace and peace be upon him). This is what the Holy Qur'an describes as the *'Fazl-i-Azim'* (the great grace). — Whatever the Holy Prophet (Allah's grace and peace be upon him) was taught by way of knowledge was taught of Allah the Almighty.<sup>29</sup>

If the teacher says to his 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 misbehaviour towards his teacher. Such an example can hardly be traced in the annals of civilised behaviour. Whatever the Holy Prophet (Allah's grace and peace be upon him) knew was through the knowledge bestowed upon him by Allah the Almighty. This being the fact, if before imparting knowledge through the Holy Qur'an, Almighty Allah mentioned the state of the Holy Prophet (Allah's grace and peace be upon him): "You

knew nothing of the book nor of the Faith (Eimaan)<sup>30</sup>; it is in consonance with the Almighty state of Divine Grandeur. It does not at all behove mortals like us to utter such words in respect of the Holy Prophet (Allah's grace and peace be upon him). This would be downright degrading and insulting the High Virtuous status of the Holy Prophet (Allah's grace and peace be upon him). The incontrovertial fact remains that Allah the Almighty granted 'the *Ilm-e-ghayb*' to the Holy Prophet (Allah's grace and peace be upon him) and if any one denies and suspects the veracity of this Divine Truth, he is surely guilty of falsehood and diminishing the eminence of Divine Favour. If there be such a one, he ought to be condemned as blasphemous, 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 other to do so.

The Darbar (seat of pre-eminences) of the Holy Prophet (Allah's grace and peace be upon him) is a grand Darbar surpassing the grandeur of worldly kings and monarchs. It is an act of misbehaviour and misdemeanour 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 misbehaviour. For them there is stern foreboding of dire punishment on the Day of Judgment. It is said : "Deem not the Summons of the Apostle among yourselves, like the summons of one of you to another". Allah doth know 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 befall them or a grievous penalty be inflicted on them.<sup>31</sup> 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 (Allah's grace and peace be upon him) where even the slightest misdemeanour is caught up as a misdeed inviting punishment from the providence.

The companions of the Holy Prophet (Allah's grace and peace be upon him) 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 alter of your dignity". To every question put to them, their reply used to be "Allah and his Prophet (Allah's grace and peace be upon him) know better".

## (6)

In the light of the foregoing evidence it must be admitted that the Holy Prophet (Allah's grace and peace be upon him) was endowed with the Knowledge of the unseen (*'Ilm-i-Ghayb*) as a Grace from Almighty Allah. We can examine this issue from three angles.

- i) The Holy Prophet (Allah's grace and peace be upon him) was granted this treasure of knowledge directly from the Providence i.e. without the means of any agency conveying the 'knowledge'.
- ii) Through the revelation of the Holy Qur'an which is the Treasure-House of all the Knowledge operating in the universe.
- iii) The Holy Prophet (Allah's grace and peace be upon him) was sent as the 'SHAHID' (Witness) i.e. a person who is in constant touch with all the affairs taking place in the world, examining and analysing them as an observer with an insight to assess and analyse their influence in day to day matters. He thus remained ever aware with 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 (Allah's grace and peace be upon him) knowledge of the unseen under the first view-point viz. the bestowment of *'Ilm-i-Ghayb* directly from Allah the Almighty, we might refer to the following verses of the Holy Qur'an.

- i) These are some of the stories of the unseen which we have revealed to you O Prophet!<sup>32</sup>
- ii) Such is one of the stories of what happened unseen which we reveal by inspiration unto you.<sup>33</sup>
- iii) The Holy Prophet (Allah's grace and peace be upon him) does not withhold grudgingly a knowledge of the Unseen.<sup>34</sup>

Examining the knowledge of the unseen of the Holy Prophet (Allah's grace and peace be upon him) from the second point of view, the following verses of the Holy Qur'an are enough to open our eyes.

- i) "And We have sent down to you the Book explaining all things, a Guide, a Mercy and Glad tidings to Muslims".<sup>35</sup>
- ii) "The Qur'an is not a tale invented, but a confirmation of what (went) before it — a detailed exposition of all things".<sup>36</sup>
- iii) "Nothing We have omitted from the Book".<sup>37</sup>
- iv) "Surely there has come to you from Allah a Light and a perspicuous Book".<sup>38</sup>
- v) "Nor is there ought of the Unseen, in heaven, or earth but it is

recorded in the Clear Book.<sup>39</sup>

- vi) There is no grain in the darkness (or depth) of the earth, nor any things, fresh or dry, (green or withered), but is inscribed in a record clear.<sup>40</sup>

It will be seen that in these, verses first there is the mention of the Holy Qur'an being the *Kitab-i-Mubeen* --- the Book Manifest making every thing 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 the 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 every thing 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 aspersion over the divine bestowment on the Holy Prophet (Allah's grace and peace be upon him).

Examining the knowledge of the unseen possessed by the Holy prophet (Allah's grace and peace be upon him) 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 on 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 our mind and vision: It is beyond our capacity to guess the extent of knowledge of the Unseen (*'Ilm-i-Ghayb*) bestowed upon Holy Prophet (Allah's grace and peace be upon him) by Almighty Allah. Only Allah knows that He has bestowed upon His beloved Prophet (Allah's grace and peace be upon him).

- i) "Surely we have sent you as a Witness, as a bringer of Glad tidling and as a warner".<sup>41</sup>
- ii) "And we shall bring you as a Witness against the people."<sup>42</sup>
- iii) "Surely we have sent to you (O men!) an apostle to be a Witness concerning you."<sup>43</sup>
- iv) "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 witness against them."<sup>44</sup>

From these verses it is clear that on the Day of Judgment not only the Holy Prophet (Allah's grace and peace be upon him) shall be a wit-

ness 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 (Allah's grace and peace be upon him) 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 (Allah's grace and peace be upon him).

- i) In one Tradition it is said : "As I see in front of me, so I see things clearly, behind me".<sup>45</sup>
- ii) In the second Tradition the Holy Prophet (Allah's grace and peace be upon him) is reported to have said : "I saw Prophet Musa in the Valley of Azraq, while passing from Mecca to Madina. He was reciting 'Talbiah' in a loud voice. On another occasion I saw Prophet Yunus (Johan) wearing a long woolen overcoat and riding a red camel."<sup>46</sup>
- iii) In the third Tradition the Holy Prophet (Allah's grace and peace be upon him) is described witnessing the paradise and the hell.<sup>47</sup>
- iv) From the fourth Tradition it is learnt that the Holy Prophet (Allah's grace and peace be upon him) knows each inmate by name going in the Paradise or in the Hell.<sup>48</sup>
- v) From the fifth Tradition it is learnt that when a man enquired from the Holy Prophet (Allah's grace and peace be upon him) whether he would go to paradise or to the hell; the Holy Prophet (Allah's grace and peace be upon him) replied without a moment's pause that "You shall go to Hell".<sup>49</sup>
- vi) The sixth Tradition says: "My entire *Ummah* was presented before me with each individual's scroll of deeds, good as well as bad".<sup>50</sup>
- vii) In the seventh Tradition the Holy Prophet (Allah's grace and peace be upon him) said : "One night my *Ummah* was presented before me at my Hujra and I know each of them as clearly as any one knows his colleague."<sup>51</sup>

At one place in the Holy Qur'an it is said: "Does he possess the knowledge of the Unseen that he sees the (dead)?"<sup>52</sup> It is understood from this verse that only such a person possesses *Ilm-i-Ghayb* as is capable of seeing things beyond normal reach in terms of time and space. At various other places in the Holy Qur'an, the transcendental power of witnessing things by the Holy Prophet (Allah's grace and peace

be upon him) has been described.<sup>53</sup> The truth is that when a Chosen Friend of Allah has seen Allah, nothing remains hidden from him. The Holy Prophet (Allah's grace and peace be upon him) has himself said: "I saw Allah the Almighty. He placed his hand on my back hand I felt the coolness in my breast; within an instant every thing became visibly clear before me and I recognised everyone".<sup>54</sup>

## (7)

So long we had been discussing the vast expanse and depth of the Holy Prophet's (Allah's grace and peace be upon him) 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 (Allah's grace and peace be upon him) 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 (Allah's grace and peace be upon him) that he not only favoured 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 Divin Dispensation of charity among the fellow beings, the humanity at large for whose benefit the vast universe has been created.

1. This is what the well known and famous devoted Companion of the Holy Prophet (Allah's grace and peace be upon him) Abuzar Ghafari has to say in this respect : "The Holy Prophet (Allah's grace and peace be upon him) 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".<sup>55</sup>

2. Another companion Hazrat Huzaifa reports : "Only the Holy Prophet (Allah's grace and peace be upon him) stood up among 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. Any one who could retain in his memory remembered it; and the one who forgot it, could not revive it afterwards".<sup>56</sup>

3. It is reported in the Tradition : "The Holy Prophet (Allah's grace and peace be upon him) 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".<sup>57</sup>

4. The Battle of Badr took place on the seventeenth of Ramazan. Before the fighting (Jihad) started, the Holy Prophet (Allah's grace and peace be upon him) 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 would be slain". When the battle was over, it was discovered that each and every person about whom the Holy Prophet (Allah's grace and peace be upon him) had indicated, was found at the very spot lying dead, neither inch more or less.<sup>58</sup>

5. There is a lengthy Tradition (Hadis) of the Holy Prophet (Allah's grace and peace be upon him) which is an eye-opener for any skeptic who entertained misgivings about the truth of Holy Prophet's (Allah's grace and peace be upon him) knowledge of the Unseen. It is reported by Hazrat Anas bin Malik, he says : "After the decline of the sun (noon) the Holy Prophet (Allah's grace and peace be upon him) came out of his Hujrah, and led the Zuhar 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 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". Hazrat Anas reports that on hearing this the companions burst in tears, (for it forebode the grave tidings of his leaving the world). But the Holy Prophet (Allah's grace and peace be upon him) continued, saying again and again: "Ask me. Ask me (as none after me will tell you).<sup>59</sup> The following verse of the Holy Qur'an bears testimony to his truth.

"The Holy Prophet (Allah's grace and peace be upon him) does not withhold grudgingly a knowledge of the unseen".<sup>60</sup>

It amounted to saying "whatever you ask will be answered and whatever you will required, shall be granted".

The insistence of the Holy Prophet (Allah's grace and peace be upon him) 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 Allah the Almighty, the Holy Prophet (Allah's grace and peace be upon him) was endowed with the knowledge of the unseen and he 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-Ghamari Al-Hasani has written a very learned book entitled *Motabiqa*

*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 author has collected forebodings of the Unseen, which the Holy Prophet (Allah's grace and peace be upon him) has disclosed on various occasions. One is inexplicably amazed and wonder struck while going through these details how gracefully, the Holy Prophet (Allah's grace and peace be upon him) was honoured 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 (Allah's grace and peace be upon him) like a mirror. Why this should not be so! because the Holy Prophet (Allah's grace and peace be upon him) has himself said: "The keys of the unseen were brought before me and placed over my hand".<sup>61</sup>

Thus the Holy Prophet (Allah's grace and peace be upon him) was made the key Bearer (Owner) of the treasures of the earth,<sup>62</sup> because one who possesses the keys, enjoys the rights of the 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 favoured and honored the Holy Prophet (Allah's grace and peace be upon him) ! These are, in fact, the keys with which the hidden meanings and interpretations of the Holy Quranic treasures are opened. The Holy Qur'an as the Divine Book, we all see and recite, but whatever the Prophetic Vision observes behind the contents of words and letters we can not even imagine and visualize with our limited blurred vision of intellect.

I might refer to but one verse of the Qur'an: "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".<sup>63</sup>

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 (Allah's grace and peace be upon him) 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 (Allah's grace and peace be upon him) 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" !<sup>64</sup>

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 Hadith0 (tradition) the Holy Prophet (Allah's grace and peace be upon

him) 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)

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 intese quarters in this behalf.

(1) The first thing to be noted in this connection is that the 'Unseen' is a reality, concrete and irrefutable.

(2) That the *'Ilm-i-Ghayb* 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.

(3) Allah the Almighty bestows this knowledge of the Unseen (*'Ilm-i-Ghayb*) to his chosen servants

(4) Allah the Almighty has granted this knowledge this knowledge of the Unseen (*'Ilm-i-Ghayb*) to the apostles and prophets.

(5) Allah the Almighty bestowed the knowledge of the unseen to the Holy Prophet Hazrat Muhammad (Allah's Grace and peace be upon him).

(6) The Holy Prophet (Allah's grace and peace be upon him) bestowed this knowledge of the Unseen (*'Ilm-i-Ghayb*) to his companion who in turn passed on 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 (Allah's Grace and peace be upon him) in one of his beautiful couplets:

*Lauh bhi tu, Qalam bhi tu, tera wujud Al-kitab  
Gumbad-e-Abgina rang tere muheet mein habab*

(You are O Holy Prophet (Allah's grace and peace be upon him)! 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 personifi-

cation 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.

Muhammad Mas'ud Ahmad

### Foot Notes

1. Surah *Alaq* : Verses 4-5.
2. Surah *Taha* : Verse 114.
3. Ibn-i-Abd al-Birr: Jami Bayan al-Ilm Wa Fazlilhi, p.47
4. *ibid.*, P-46, 49.
5. Surah *Baqarah* : Verse 247.
6. Surah *Baqarah*: Verse 31
7. Surah *Kah'f* : Verse 65.
8. Surah *Baqarah* : Verse 3
9. Surah *An'am* : Verse 59.
10. Surah *Baqarah* : Verse 33
11. Surah *Yunus* : Verse 20.
12. Surah *Hud* : Verse 31.
13. Surah *Jinn* : Verse 26.
14. Surah *Ale Imran* : Verse 179
15. Surah *Baqarah* : Verse 31
16. Surah *Baqarah* : Verse 251.
17. Surah *Namal* : Verse 16.
18. Surah *Anbiya* : Verse 74.
19. Surah *Yous'f*: Verse 96.
20. Surah *Yous'f*: Verse 22.
21. Surah *Qasas* : Verse 140.
22. Surah *Kah'f* : Verse 65.
23. Surah *Ale Imran* : Verse 49.
24. Surah *Yous'f*: Verse 37
25. Surah *Jinn* : Verse 26
26. Surah *Baqarah* : Verse 253
27. Surah *Kah'f* : Verse 65-82
28. Surah *Nisa* : Verse 113.
29. Surah *Aala* : Verse 6.
30. Surah *Nur*: Verse 63
31. Surah *Shura*: Verse 52
32. Surah *Hud* : Verse 49
33. Surah *Yous'f*: Verse 102
34. Surah *Takweer* : Verse 24
35. Surah *Nahl*: Verse 89
36. Surah *Yous'f* Verse 111
37. Surah *An'am*: Verse 38
38. Surah *Maida* : Verse 15
39. Surah *Nam'l* : Verse 75
40. Surah *An'am*: V.59
41. Surah *Fatah*: Ver-8.
42. Surah *Nisa* : Ver 41
43. Surah *Muzzammil*: Verse 15.
44. Surah *Nah*, I: Ver-89
45. Muslim Sharif vol .2, p 116.
46. Ibn-i- Majah pp. 20, 208
47. Muslim Sharif vol 2, p 180.
48. Mishkat Sharif, p. 19
49. Bukhari Sharif vol. 3, p. 855.
50. Muslim Shaif vol. 1, p. 207, Musnad-i-Ahmad, Ibn-e-Maja
51. Ref : Anba al-Mustafa, p.19, ref: Tibrani.
52. Surah Najam Verse 35.
53. Surahs *Mujadilah* : Verse 7; Surah *Ibrahim*: Verse 19; Surah *Baqarah* : Verse 243 & 258; jj : 18 ; Surah *Nur* : 41; Surah *Feel*:
54. Tirmizi Sharif, Mishkat Sharif, Karachi, p.72
55. Anba al-Mustafa, p.8 with reference to Musnad-i-Ahmad and Tabaqat-i- Ibn-i- Sa'ad.
56. Anba al-Mustafa ; p.7 reference: Bukhari, Muslim and Musnad-i- Ahmad.
57. Mishkat Sharif, Bab al-Fitan
58. Muslim Sharif, Kitab al-Jihad vol. II
59. Bukhari Sharif, Kitab al-Etisaam Vol. III, p.855
60. Surah *Takweer* : Verse 24
61. Bukhari Sharif p.848, and Muslim Sharif, Vol. II, p.116.
62. Bukhari and Muslim Sharif.
63. Surah *Anfal*: Verse 60
64. Muslim Sharif, Volume II, p.143.

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# THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE UNSEEN

ENGLISH VERSION OF THE URDU

TREATISE

*"ILM-I-GHAYB"*

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