



Obstacles in the Path of Knowledge: Not Being Gradual in Acquiring Knowledge

An explanation of some points from “Obstacles in the Path of Knowledge” (of Shaikh Abdus-Salaam Burjis) by Abu Hakeem Bilaal Davies. Transcribed by Abu and Umm Mariam for SalafiPublications.Com, edited and amended by Abu Iyaad Amjad Rafiq, checked by Abu Talhah Dawud Burbank.

Introduction

All Praise is due to Allaah, we praise Him, seek His aid and His Forgiveness. We seek refuge in Allaah from the evils of our souls and the evils of our actions. Whomsoever Allaah guides there is none to misguide and whomsoever Allaah misguides there is none to guide. I bear witness that there is none worthy of worship except Allaah, alone, without any partners and I bear witness that Muhammad is His servant and messenger.

Allah (subhana wata’ala) says:

“Verily! It is We Who have sent down the Qur’ân to you (O Muhammad) by stages.” (Dahr 76:23)

“And those who disbelieve say: ‘If only the Qur’aan was revealed all at one time.’ (Thus it is sent down in parts) that we may strengthen your heart thereby and we recited (revealed) it to you *tarteelan*’ (‘in stages’-or explained by some of the scholars of tafseer to mean ‘with its explanation’). (Furqaan 25:32).

Az-Zubaidee (rahimahullah) mentioned(narrating from the book ‘adh-dharee’ah’ concerning the job of the teacher): “It is important for the student not to enter into a particular Ilm until he takes the Ilm that was before it and he deals with it sufficiently and takes from it that which he needs. For indeed to force knowledge into ones head is a means of losing understanding.”

So we should start with Tawheed and then move on to other types of knowledge.

Shaykh Burjis goes on to mention: “The tadarujj (graduation) is in two affairs. As for the first affair it is for us to be gradual between the sciences and then secondly being gradual in one particular science that an individual learns.”

Abul-Ainaa mentioned: “I came to Abdullah ibn Dawood [*] and he said, ‘What is it that has brought you?’ I said: Verily I have come for hadith. So he said ‘Go away and memorise the Qur’aan.’ I said: indeed I have memorised the Qur’aan. So he said ‘Read.’ So I recited a good portion from where he told me to recite, from there and after, until I finished. He said ‘Go now then and learn the fara’id.’ I said: indeed I have learnt the main and major issues in that regard. So he said ‘Very well. Who is closest to you, your nephew or your uncle?’ So I said: My nephew. He asked ‘And why?’ I said: ‘Verily because my

brother is from my mother and my uncle is from my grandfather.' So he said 'Go now and learn Arabic.' I said: Indeed I learnt Arabic before these two. He said 'Very well. Why did Umar (radiallahu anhu) say when he was fatally wounded - Ya lallah wa lil muslimmeen - why did the first laam have a fatha and the second laam have a khasra?' I said: Because that one (first laam) is a laam that is for du'a and the laam for du'a has the fatha. And the other (second laam) is for istigaatha (seeking relief). So he said 'If there was anybody I would give hadeeth to, then I would narrate to you'."

[*] Abdullah ibn Daawood ibn 'Aamir, Aboo Abdur-Rahman al-Hamdaanee, al-Khuraybee, al-Koofee, then al-Basree. The Imaam, the hafiz. He said "The religion does not come from rhetoric, rather the religion comes from narrations." He made it very difficult for people to narrate from him, and he ceased narrating hadeeth a few years before his death. He died in the year 213AH (rahimahullah). Refer to as-Siyar, 9:351.

Benefits from this Lesson

1. The Qur'aan was revealed in stages, not all in one go. This illustrates the gradual increase in knowledge.
2. Being gradual in acquiring knowledge includes being gradual between types of knowledge, and then being gradual within a particular knowledge. For example, the first knowledge is Tawheed. So we acquire all of this first, before moving on to other knowledge. Then within this knowledge we can decide either to go through a particular book first (e.g. Kashf ush-Shubuhaat, or Usool ath-Thalaathah etc.) before another. Or we can choose to look at Tawheed al-Uloohiyyah and understand it thoroughly (i.e. through the books of Shaikh ul-Islaam Muhammad bin Abdul-Wahhaab) before we embark upon a detailed study of the Names and Attributes etc (through the various small works of Shaikh ul-Islaam Ibn Taymiyyah). So being gradual is inter-disciplinary (between sciences) and intra-disciplinary (within a particular science). Or for example, when we embark upon fiqh, then we learn the fiqh of purification and prayer, before we learn the fiqh of fasting or hajj. So everything is gradual and is based upon what is most important or what is required at the time and then what comes after that.
3. It is important not to start on a new type of knowledge until one has mastered what one needs from the previous knowledge he is learning.