

## MODULE 2

**Class Title:** ‘Ilm gotta have it – part 2  
(2<sup>nd</sup> part of a 3 lesson series)

**Aim of Lesson:** To introduce different branches of Islamic learning

**Category:** Personal Development

**Lesson Format:** Power point presentation with narration. Discussion

(Greeting to students) *Assalam alaikum wa Rahmatullahi wa Barakatuh*  
(*Taooz*) *Aoodhubillahi min AsShaytanir Rajeem*  
(*Tasmiyah*) *Bismillahir Rahmanir Raheem*  
(*Du'a*) *Rabbish rahli sadri wa yassirli amri wahlul uqdatum millisani yafqahu qawli*  
(Surah At Ta-Ha 20: Verse 25-28)

Slides 1 - 2:

Teacher: What were we talking about last week?

Student: *`Ilm*.

Teacher: *`Ilm*. Can somebody give me a very quick recap, what is the difference between *`ilm* and knowledge? Does anybody remember?

Student: *`Ilm* changes you.

Student: *`Ilm* makes a difference.

Teacher: *`Ilm* is when it makes a difference in our life. OK. What else? What was the other key point? Anybody?

Student: *`Ilm* is what you learn in Allah's name.

Teacher: *Alhamdulillah*, you are very close. All *`ilm*, all knowledge, is from Allah (swt). The basic purpose of knowledge or *`ilm* is to seek the pleasure of Allah (swt). That was the gist of last week's class. Whether it is, quote and unquote, 'Islamic Knowledge' or any other knowledge. Remember the discussion on playing 'Trivial Pursuit' and how we can convert knowledge into beneficial *`ilm*?

Rasool Allah (pbuh) said,

“Whosoever follows a path to seek knowledge, Allah (swt) will make easy for him a path to paradise.” [Muslim]

Why is that? What is so great about going out in search of knowledge? Keep in mind that in Islam, there is no such thing as sacred knowledge or secular knowledge. There is only permissible *`ilm* and forbidden *`ilm*.

Only a few types of *`ilm*, certain pieces of knowledge, are not allowed in Islam. For example, magic, or the techniques for making wine, etc. There are people, who make alcohol, don't they? Right? They have extensive knowledge of how to do that. Making really good wine is a science, isn't it? There is the distillation process or whatever. All that's based on what? On knowledge! So, if you are using such information to make alcohol, then that's problematic, understand? There is nothing

wrong with distilling things, but if you are distilling things and then fermenting and making wine out of it than that's problematic.  
Other than that, you can't say that only the Qur'an, the *Sunnah*, *Fiqh*, etc. is Islamic knowledge and everything else isn't. We clearly discussed in last week's class that all knowledge is from Allah (swt).

Slides 3 – 4:

Today we will discuss how a little knowledge that is acted upon is worth much more than a lot of knowledge that just sits there looking pretty. It is extremely important to remember this point.

Allah (swt) says:

“O you who believe, why do you say that which you do not do? Most hateful it is with Allah (swt) that you say that which you do not do.” (Surah As-Saff 61: Ayat 2-3)

Islam, in **all** its aspects, is about action. This includes *`ilm*. *`Ilm* just for the sake of *`ilm*, means nothing. In Islam, *`ilm* is a means to attaining something much higher (closeness to Allah [swt]). Something much greater.

Slides 5 -7:

Rasool Allah (pbuh) said:

“Seeking knowledge is obligatory upon every Muslim.” [Bayhaqi, Al Tabarani].  
What kind of knowledge is he talking about which is obligatory? Seeking knowledge is obligatory upon everyone. Does everybody know the meaning of 'obligatory'? It's like what you call *fard* (obligatory). Remember, knowledge is a means of attaining Allah (swt)'s pleasure. So, the kind of knowledge that is obligatory is directly related to attaining the pleasure of Allah (swt). That is the purpose of *`ilm*.

Slide 8:

What is the source of most *`ilm* which brings us closer to Allah (swt)? Two major sources are the Qur'an and the *Sunnah*. Does everybody know what *Sunnah* is?

Student: The actions of the Prophet (pbuh).

Teacher: The actions, the sayings and the tacit approval of certain things by the Prophet (pbuh) is one aspect of *Sunnah*. *Sunnah* has at least 3 definitions:

*Sunnah* is an Arabic word

- Lexical meaning is road or practice
- Literal meaning is beaten track or established course of conduct
- Pre-Islamic Arabs used the word for ancient or continuous practice

In Islamic terminology, *Sunnah* has different meanings depending on who is using it.

Scholars of *Fiqh* (Islamic Jurisprudence) define *Sunnah* as that which is not obligatory to do but if a person does so he is rewarded. E.g. two *raka'ah* (unit) *salah* after *Zuhr* prayer are not *Fardh* (obligatory) but *Sunnah*. By this meaning of the

definition, when a person hears the word *Sunnah* he will automatically think of something that is less than the *Fardh*. This is most commonly known meaning of *Sunnah*.

Scholars of *Hadith* define *Sunnah* as all of the statements, actions, tacit approvals - those acts that were done in front of the Prophet (pbuh) and he did not object to them, and also the characteristics of the Prophet (pbuh).

Everybody knows what the Qur'an is?

Students: Yes.

Teacher: What is the Qur'an?

Student: It is the book of Allah (swt).

Teacher: The Qur'an is the last revelation of Allah (swt) to mankind. Aside from these two sources, the writings of pious scholars are also important. For example, look at this class; I don't speak Arabic and the majority of the classical works of Islam are in which language?

Students: Arabic.

Teacher: The Qur'an is in which language?

Students: Arabic.

Teacher: All of the *Hadith* are originally in which language?

Students: Arabic.

Teacher: Arabic. So, how does that information come to us? Through the work of learned scholars. Through people who learn Arabic and who spend their entire lives studying and gaining knowledge. Then they transmit it to ignorant people like us. That is how, that is why, the writings of great scholars are a very important source for people like us.

Slide 9

Rasool Allah (pbuh) also said:

“When Allah wishes good for a person, He makes him understand the *deen*.”

[Bukhari & Muslim]

Remember last week we said that all of you study Islamic Studies in school, don't you? Is there anybody here who doesn't have Islamic Studies in school? You don't? Why?

Student: I go to an overseas school.

Teacher: All right, one exception. The rest of you, you all have Islamic Studies in school? Right. The day you gain true understanding of the *deen* (Islam), all that study is going to convert itself into *`ilm*. Just getting information, pieces of information, doesn't mean anything. Once your heart gets involved, once your mind gets engaged that is when you understand *deen* (Islam). And whosoever Allah (swt) wishes good for, He gives them understanding of the *deen* (Islam). This is a very profound *hadith*. Extremely profound. It's something to really think about and understand. This is something we should be asking Allah (swt) for.

The *du'a* (prayer) that Rasool Allah (pbuh) used to make most frequently was what? [Recite in Arabic]

“O Allah! Give me good in this world and good in the *akhirah*...”

(Surah Al-Baqarah 2: Verse 201).

So, part of the good in this world is the understanding of the *deen* (Islam) and that is very closely related to what? To *`ilm*. To knowledge. Right. Now, let's go over our facts:

- a) the purpose of *`ilm* is gaining Allah (swt)'s pleasure and
- b) Rasool Allah (pbuh) said when Allah (swt) wishes good for someone, He gives the knowledge, the understanding of the *deen* to that person.

Slides 10 - 11 :

*`Ilm* in Islam can be divided into two categories. One is what you must have, obligatory knowledge that the Prophet (pbuh) was talking about; it is incumbent, it is *fard*, it is obligatory on every Muslim to gain this knowledge. This category is called *fard-e-aain*. Knowledge that is obligatory for the individual Muslim.

The second category is an optional thing. Whether you have it or not, it's okay. If you have it, wonderful! If not, it doesn't mean that it is going to affect your *imaan* (faith). I am sorry, of course it will affect your *imaan* (faith), but it is not going to affect your standing with Allah (swt) i.e. you are not going to be in a state of sin. Does everybody understand?

We will discuss this a little bit more. Please. This is very important for you guys to understand. If any of you don't get it, please ask questions. There is no problem in that. Okay?

Slide 12:

Now, must-have knowledge is obligatory knowledge, knowledge that will make me a Muslim. Last week we talked about how we are not born Muslims, instead, it is knowledge that makes us Muslim. As a Muslim, I have two obligations: one is towards Allah (swt) and the other is towards Allah (swt)'s creation. It is very simple, I am a human being, you are a human being. We all have relationships with people. For example, you have your parents, your siblings, family, friends, and then there are acquaintances: people you know in school or people you work with, etc. Man is a social animal. Isn't it so? We are all social people. Allah (swt) has made us so that we are interacting constantly. The interaction with others is one very huge and important aspect of our *deen* (Islam). This is the second obligation on us.

To return to the first obligation, which is my personal interaction with whom? With? I say, “*La illaha illallah Muhammad ur Rasool Allah (pbuh)*.” There is no god but Allah (swt) and Muhammad (pbuh) is His Messenger. So, I am on the *deen* (Islam) of Allah (swt). Allah (swt) is my *Rabb* (sustainer), then who do I follow? I follow Rasool Allah (pbuh), the Prophet of Allah (swt). Since I say *La illaha illallah*, I have an obligation towards Allah (swt) and I have an obligation towards Allah’s (swt) creation. The reason why I say 'creation' is because Islam is a comprehensive way of life, so we have an obligation not only towards people but towards animals, plants, the planet Earth, etc.

Given these two obligations, I must know what the fundamentals of my faith are. For example, when I am saying *La illaha illallah*, I must know what that means. Who is Allah (swt)? What concept of Allah (swt) do I have in my head? What knowledge do I have about that?

There are Muslims who have various different ideas about Allah (swt). I will give you a very simple example. You see thousands and thousands of Muslims going to *mazaars* (tombs) to pray to the person buried there. Is that true or not? Right. So, what is their concept of Allah (swt)? They also say that Allah (swt) is my God. But what is their concept of Allah (swt)?

Student: They think that you can pray to Allah (swt) by other means.

Student: They are associating partners with Allah (swt)..

Teacher: So what is the problem? There is a problem in the fundamentals of their faith. To just say that you **believe** in Allah (swt) is not enough; you need to **know** Allah (swt)'s attributes. The day we recognize Allah (swt), after that day we will never be able to sin so openly and so guiltlessly. The day that recognition gets in here (point to heart) and in here (point to head), that is the day we transform, that is the day our lives transform. Just saying that Allah (swt) is my God and yes, yes, I am a Muslim, means nothing. It means absolutely nothing. The day the realization dawns upon you, that ping moment is what changes your life. There is no way that you can remain the same person that you were before *imaan* (faith). There is a very interesting saying that: ‘you can be the same before and after Islam but you can never be the same before and after *imaan* (faith)’.

Fundamentals of faith are related to your *imaan* (faith). Who do you believe in? This is obligatory knowledge. The other obligatory knowledge is what does Allah (swt) want from me? My purpose is to please Him so what does He want from me? Do you realize how important it is to know what pleases Allah (swt)? For example, you want to please your mom. The first thing you need to know is what she likes. What if you order Chinese food for your mother and she doesn’t like Chinese food? There goes the purpose of pleasing her. I mean she doesn’t even like Chinese food. So, you need to know what she likes before doing something for her.

Or for example, take a person like me who doesn’t like clicking pens. Now, you say, “I want to please Auntie.” while sitting there clicking your pen. I am watching you and becoming irritated like, “Oh, stop it now!” Do you see what I mean? So we need

to know what Allah (swt) wants from us. Where are we going to find this information? Is it going to come from the fact that I was born in a Muslim family? No, I need to find out for myself. What is it that Allah (swt) likes? What does He want from me? What are my obligations towards Him?

In the same way, we need to know how to fulfil our obligation to Allah (swt)'s creation. Since my purpose is to please Allah (swt), I need to know the necessary dealings that I have to have with other people. For example, Allah (swt) has said in the Qur'an, don't even say uffh to your parents. 'uffh' is the exact word from the Qur'an; this is not an interpretation. These are the words of the Qur'an: don't even say uffh to your parents. For a person who is a Muslim, who understands that, will they ever stand in front of their mother and argue their heart out? No, but we don't have that realization, that is the reason we do these things. So, you need to know the responsibilities that Allah (swt) has given you and what rights you have.

It's very simple and straightforward. But I need to know that, otherwise how will I please Allah (swt)? For example, if I had not told you that I don't like clicking pens then all of you could be happily clicking away and *it would not be your fault*. Would it? Since you don't know? Having been told that I don't like clicking pens, now if you feel like clicking again, you are going to think twice that perhaps she's going to be upset or she will scold or ask me to leave the class. Do you understand that? So, we need to know. The situation that Allah (swt) has put us in, we, all of us sitting in this room, are from a very privileged class of people, very privileged. We will not be able to stand in front of Allah (swt) and just say, "I didn't know." So, why didn't you bother to find out? If you are calling yourself a Muslim, if you are saying *La illaha illallah Muhammad ur Rasul Allah (pbuh)*, then find out what it means to be a Muslim. So, the knowledge that is necessary for you to even be a Muslim is obligatory on you, on each and every Muslim. This also includes acts of worship. The five daily prayers are required so you need to know how to do it, how to purify yourself for the prayer (*taharht*), what clothes to wear, and so on. If you don't know, how will you fulfil your obligation towards Allah (swt)?

As far as your dealings with other people are concerned, the requirements are different for different people. Why? For example, is anybody in this room, except me, married? No! Thus, even if all of you have zero knowledge about how a woman should be with her husband, it's fine since you are not in that situation. But for me, since I am married and a mother, that is obligatory knowledge. I must know how I should be with my husband and children. Got it? Also, situations change. If somebody never gets married then *Alhamdulillah*, no problem, even if she never finds out the rights and responsibilities of husbands. For most of you, 5 or 10 years down the line, whenever one of you is about to be married then it becomes obligatory on you to find out about marriage, husbands, and in-laws. That knowledge becomes absolutely essential. Anybody a doctor in this room? Are there any doctors here? No? For a doctor, it is essential to know which things he can and can't do in his profession, in terms of Allah (swt)'s commandments.

Student: What about the basic stuff, the basic dealings?

Teacher: Basic dealings are the same across the board, like being truthful. Right? Like not backbiting. The basic moral laws are the same for everybody. Whether you are

married or not married; whether you have parents or are an orphan; whether you live on the street or in a mansion, they are all the same. Moral laws are all the same. Do you understand what moral laws are? Moral laws are, *Alhamdulillah*, not even Islam specific. Everybody knows that you should not lie and if you still lie, that means that you don't recognize Allah (swt). Everybody knows that backbiting is a bad thing and if you are still doing it that means there is a problem here. It means that there is a gap between the information and the *`ilm* about backbiting. The information has not converted itself into *`ilm* and particularly beneficial *`ilm*.

So, all basic moral things, *jazakillah* for pointing that out, are for everybody. For example, a small child doesn't know he fibs. He needs to be taught. It's the parent's responsibility or the older siblings to point out, "No, no. We don't tell lies!" That's knowledge converting into *`ilm* as the kid learns good habits.

Let's look at social interactions. In social interactions, everybody's situation is a little different but the majority of people are in the same kind of situation. There are always exceptions, which is why I gave you an example of the difference between me and you guys. For example, I don't go to school so your dealings in school are something which are specific to you lot sitting over here. I am past that stage. You should know how to behave with your teachers and classmates, it is obligatory on you. Right!

Slide 13

What do we need to know? For every relationship, every aspect of our lives, we must know what is allowed and what is not allowed, what is *halal* (permissible) and what is *haram* (prohibited). Simple. Basic. Whether it is our clothing, our food, our social dealings or even our education; for each we must know what is permissible and what is not permissible. Right. All aspects of our lives. The wonderful part is that very few things are not allowed. The vast majority is allowed. Simple example. How many kinds of drinks can you guys think of? Thousands, quite literally! All sorts of fruit juices, nectars and syrups, all sorts of fizzy drinks, all sorts of coffees, teas and herbals. So many types of drinks are allowed. What is not allowed?

Student: Alcohol.

Teacher: One item: Alcohol. Allah (swt) says in the Qur'an that Satan makes the *haram* (prohibited) *mozaiyan* (beautiful/attractive). He makes all the *haram* (prohibited) things, which are very few, very attractive so you feel that, "If I don't smoke pot then how can I go through college?" He puts your entire focus on the one *haram* (prohibited) item and you ignore the 1000 *halal* (permissible) alternatives.

Automatically you become ungrateful; ignoring all the things that are allowed, you say, "Oh God! I am not allowed to do anything!" or "If I can't listen to music, what is the point?" or "What's the point of my existence?" All that we can do, becomes zero or nullified. Whatever Allah (swt) has disallowed, Satan makes it into one, big party scene, one big hoopla until it becomes the most important thing in your life.

We need to know the *haram* (prohibited) things so that we can stay away from them and thus please Allah (swt). That's why I said that it is very closely related to the reason for getting knowledge in the first place.

Student: It will change the way we think.

Teacher: It makes us change the way we think, absolutely.

Student: We look at things, like this is *haram* (prohibited), the rest is *halal* (permissible). But we eventually think that only these things are *halal*.

Teacher: Everything is *halal* (permissible), only a few things are *haram* (prohibited). How we start off is, “Oh my God, No, No, and No.” We don't start with, “Yes, you can do this and this and this.” Yes to this, yes to that, and yes. Although if you look at Allah (swt)'s laws, the majority of things are yes, yes, yes and yes. One or two ‘no’s’ here and there. Yet, those one or two ‘no's' have been made into a big boogie man by Satan. Like I said, we need to know what Allah (swt) demands of us because unless we know, how are we ever going to gain Allah (swt)'s pleasure?

Slide 14:

This basic knowledge is called the knowledge of the Islamic *Shari'ah* (Islamic law). *Shari'ah* (Islamic law) is the big 'S' word, these days. Please remember, look at this word '*Shari'ah*' and look at what you read in the newspapers. The big boogie man of today: *Shari'ah* laws.

Student: What does *Shari'ah* mean?

Teacher: The literal meaning of *Shari'ah* is what you see in the picture: [1] a watering hole, [2] the path that goes through watering holes and [3] a path (any path). That is the literal meaning of the Arabic word: *Shari'ah*. We say Shahrah-e-faisal, Shahrah-e-so and so. '*Shahrah*' comes from *Shari'ah* for that is the root word. It means a path, a way, a route. *Shari'ah* is the way to where? To the watering hole, to Allah (swt). That is why it is called *Shari'ah*.

Generally we think of *Shari'ah* laws are 1. oppressing women, 2. cutting peoples' hands off, 3. flogging them. Isn't that what we think about when we say *Shari'ah* laws? “Oh my God, discrimination!” However, gender laws are just one very tiny part of it. Every commandment of Allah (swt) is a *Shari'ah* law. It's not just ‘do’s’ and ‘don’ts’. It's like, “Smile!” that's part of *Shari'ah*. Qur'an and *Hadith* are also *Shari'ah*. It's the way to Allah (swt)'s approval. Are you all with me over here or not? This word is flogged to death a lot of times. Is it clear what *Shari'ah* really is?

Slide 15:

The thing is that these 'dos' and 'don'ts', they exist in every civilized society. There is a reason for that. Look around you. 'No smoking' zones. Dress codes for clubs and good restaurants. They say, “Rights of admission reserved”. Your club won't allow you in the dining hall in shorts and sandals. Doesn't that happen? Do you guys ever go to clubs? Doesn't that happen? “Rights of admission reserved.” It's not such a big deal, is it? “Dogs not allowed”, “Photography not allowed” “Mobile phones not allowed”! Don't we see these sorts of signs across the world? In fact, in most parts of the world, smoking is considered contemptible. People will scorn you or sympathize,



“Oh my God, you poor pathetic thing, you smoke!” People are dead against smoking now. *Alhamdulillah*, it's a good thing. No aeroplane allows smoking now. Those are well-known ‘do’s’ and ‘don’ts’, aren’t they? Why do these laws exist? For the benefit of people. They are there for the benefit of the people and that is what makes us civilized.

Laws are the mark of civilization. What will happen if we have no laws, no rules and regulations? Aren’t we all always crying about people not following the laws in Pakistan? “There are no traffic laws here.” “Nobody stops at a red light,” Don’t we say such things? Particularly, if we go abroad on vacation, we come back impressed by the law and order there. Wow, they have such law and order there and we are such a chaotic country. Don’t we say that? Don’t you hear people saying that we are so chaotic out here because we don’t follow rules and regulations?

Rules and regulations make people civilized and Islam is the most civilizing agent humanity has ever known. So we, as students of knowledge, need to know which things are permissible and which are not permissible? Are you all with me or not?

Slide 16:

The second category of knowledge is *farz-e-kifaya* or optional knowledge. If somebody gains it, *Alhamdulillah*, but everyone doesn't have to as long as some people from the community are. For example, becoming a scholar of Islam. Everybody can't become a scholar. I am not a scholar, neither are you. We have basic knowledge of Islam because that is obligatory knowledge of Islam. Thus, becoming a scholar is *fard-e-kifaya*. Optional. *Alhamdulillah*, if Allah (swt) gives you an opportunity, go for it. If not, then it is not going to have any bearing on your Hereafter. The list of optional knowledge is endless. It includes just about anything you want to be: an astronaut, or whatever. Any kind of knowledge could come under this category.

A person maybe unlettered and illiterate and yet be proficient in obligatory knowledge. Do you get the idea? For example, a maid working in your house, she doesn't know how to read or write but she knows how to do *salah* (ritual prayer), *taharah* (purification), *roza* (fasting) and basic moral laws like honesty, integrity, keeping promises, etc. She has this basic knowledge and her dealings with people are spot on wonderful; she is the most knowledgeable person around you. She has real *ilm*. Compare her to the person who's sitting there with lots of fancy-tancy books, reading and writing on laptops and what have you! Yet doing what? They have no clue about Islam.

We call Rasul Allah (pbuh) an *ummi* as he didn't know how to read and write, yet who is more knowledgeable than him? I am not saying that you shouldn't read or write, that is going to extremes in today's day and age. I am just giving you an example that gaining knowledge doesn't mean writing. So many people in Pakistan, go through Islamic Studies in school since they were this high and at the end of the day they have no clue about Islam. Those of you who do 'O' levels in Islam have more knowledge than most of the Perception's team put together because you do quite a bit in 'O' levels. The problem is in how you use that knowledge and why you gain it.

Slides 17 - 18:

*Insha'Allah*, we are going to briefly cover some branches of Islamic knowledge because you hear these terms and you need to know what they mean.

*Aqeedah*. What does *aqeedah* mean? *Aqeedah* is this fundamental belief. "I believe in Allah (swt), His angels, His books, His Messengers, in the Day of Judgement, that good and evil is ordained by Allah (swt) and in the life after death. This is the *aqeedah* of a Muslim, the belief in the unseen.

So, you need to know who Allah (swt) is, about the angels, about His books and about His Messengers. True or not? To get this information requires effort. This information is not going to appear out of nowhere by magic. If there is a problem with the *aqeedah* than you will be going to the *mazaar* (tombs) to pray to and ask from dead people. Knowledge about the core beliefs of a Muslim, the fundamentals of our faith is called *aqeedah*.

Slide 19:

*Tajweed* is the proper way to read the Qur'an. How many of you have read the Qur'an with *tajweed*?

Raise your hands high, I can't see! OK, right. How many of you know what *tajweed* is? Tell me, what is *tajweed*?

Student: Correct pronunciation.

Teacher: The exact pronunciation, *Alhamdulillah*. The pronunciation that Rasool Allah (pbuh) used to read the Qur'an. That is what *tajweed* is. Do you know what Surah Al-Baqarah begins with? What does Surah Al-Baqarah begin with? *Alif laam meem*. So why do we pronounce it like *alif laaaaam meeeem*. Why don't we say 'alam'? The way it is written, it should be pronounced 'alam'. Why do we say it differently? That is what *tajweed* is all about. We pronounce the way Rasool Allah (pbuh) pronounced it. *Tajweed* has to be learned, it doesn't come naturally to non-Arabs like us. The majority of the Muslims in this world are non-arabs so most of us are in the same boat. Right. We cannot recite the Qur'an without it. After all, we cannot read the Qur'an in Urdu.

Student: What if we copy the *qaris* (expert reciters) from a CD?

Teacher: Fine. If we listen to CDs and read it properly, *Alhamdulillah*. I have a student who is absolutely wonderful. Her makharij, ghunnas and hamzas, are all superb; she reads beautifully. She always fails her theory test. Since, she is reading properly, then *Alhamdulillah* that is fine. Do you understand that? Theory is a means to reading properly. The end goal is to recite properly: whether you achieve it by listening and copying or by learning the theory of each letter, that's up to you. This is an important subject, very very important. We can't read the Qur'an in any other language.

Slide 20:

*Tafseer*. Do you know what *tafseer* is? *Tafseer* means the commentary, the explanation of the Qur'an, how were the verses revealed, when were they revealed, what are the various meanings of the ayahs, etc. The Qur'anic sciences include various different subjects of which *tafseer* is one. Generally speaking, we need to know what is in the Qur'an but it is not obligatory on each and every Muslim to know the entire commentary of the Qur'an. It is not obligatory knowledge.

We are only defining a few of the Islamic sciences in this class; there are a lot more sciences of classical Islamic learning.

Slide 21:

Next is *fiqh*, have you hear of this word '*fiqh*'? No? You have never heard of '*fiqh*' before? The literal meaning of '*fiqh*' is to understand. Remember the *hadith* that I just told you that if Allah (swt) wishes good for somebody, He gives him understanding of the *deen*. The Arabic word used in this *hadith* is '*fiqh*' of the '*deen*'. Rasool Allah (pbuh) used to make this du'a:

“*Allahumma Faqqehni fid deen*”[ Bukhari & Muslim]  
“Oh Allah (swt), give me deep understanding of the *deen*.”

The word used to refer to 'deep understanding' in this prayer is '*faqqi*' from '*fiqh*'. *Fiqh* is what? How to do things. All of us, knowingly or unknowingly, all of us know a little bit of *fiqh*. Do you know how to pray? Well, then you know *fiqh*. Do you understand that?

There are slight differences in the *fiqh* of various different groups of Muslims, which is perfectly fine as long as it is based on the Qur'an and the Sunnah. It is perfectly fine. I will give you an example. Rasool Allah (pbuh) used to pray keeping his hands like this as well as like this (show with actions). A little up and a little down. When we were praying over here, some of you raised your hands when saying *Allahu Akbar* while going in *ruku* and some of you didn't. Which is fine. That is all *fiqh*, how to do things.

Slide 22:

The formal definition of *fiqh* is the discussion of legal regulations of Islam along with their specific evidences. *Shari'ah* and *Fiqh* are not the same. *Shari'ah* is the way; divine revelation and the Sunnah. Divine revelation means the Qur'an and the Sunnah of Rasool Allah (pbuh). *Shari'ah* is something which does not change. *Shari'ah* is something where there is no difference of opinion by anybody. For example, alcohol is *haram* (prohibited), end of story. You know that there are no exceptions to this. Alcohol is *haram* (prohibited). Right. Menstrual blood is impure. Interest is *haram* (prohibited). This is part of the *Shari'ah*.

*Fiqh* are rulings which are taken from the principles in the *Shari'ah*, from the Qur'an and Sunnah. This can be done in various different ways. I just gave you an example that you can put your hand like this or you can put your hand like this. The

specifications and details of the law or Shari'ah can change according to time and circumstances. For example, using alcohol for medicinal purposes. Alcohol is prohibited in the *Shari'ah*. So the *fiqh* of that is that it is prohibited unless it can save people from serious illnesses and there are no alternative, alcohol-free medicines. We are not going to go into the details of how to derive *fiqh*. That is not for ignorant people like us. I am including myself in that category too.

As students of Islamic knowledge, we need to know what these terms mean and *Insha'Allah* maybe Allah (swt) will give us opportunities to know them better.

Slides 23 – 24:

*Hadith*, its literal meaning is something new or latest. The scholars of *hadith*, the *muhaddithoon* defined it as any news attributed to Rasool Allah (pbuh). This is a basic, very simplistic definition. I just want you guys to understand these terms so that if you hear them, at least you know what that person is talking about. When I say, "Rasool Allah (pbuh) said .....", this means what? This is news which has been attributed to Rasool Allah (pbuh) and it came to us through various chains of people narrating from one generation to the next.

*Seerah*: we all know what *seerah* is? It is the biography of Rasul Allah (pbuh) starting from his ancestors. Do you study it in your 'O' levels? You do? OK.

So, these are just a few of the well-known branches of Islamic knowledge. We haven't gone into any details- we have just defined their scope. If you hear these terms, you will know what it means.

Slide 25:

*Insha'Allah*, once we are going to start by acknowledging that we are ignorant. That is the first step towards knowledge. If you think, "I am so smart. I know everything." then just go home. You will never learn anything. The very first step to knowledge is realizing our own ignorance. The greatest scholars of all time, who spent their entire lives in study and research, were very humble about the limitations of their Islamic knowledge. People would ask questions and they would admit ignorance without shame. "*Wallah-u-alam*. Allah (swt) knows and I don't know." They had no false pride. Humility and *haya* is the mark of a true scholar, a true seeker of knowledge.

Sometimes we are over-smart; somebody asks us something and we rush to answer. We listen to a 20 minute lecture somewhere and think ourselves a *fakeeh* (Scholar with mastery in the *fiqh* branch of Islam.)

Slide 26:

The thing to accept is the attitude: I need to learn. Only then will the learning process begin. Islamic knowledge has a system: get it, save it, do it and give it. *Ilm* includes acquiring knowledge, preserving it, acting on it and preaching it. All of it put together is *ilm* - you can't take even one thing out of this equation. How do you preserve it? How do you preserve it? A simple example: you memorize some of the Qur'an. That's preserving it, isn't it? You write something, on paper or in your laptop. These

are all examples preserving. You have to do it. It is essential to preserve *'ilm*. It can't just sit there – that's not how the system works.

Slide 27:

Before starting your quest for *'ilm*, you must pray to Allah (swt):

*"Rabbi zidnii 'ilmaa."* "Oh Allah increase me in my knowledge"

(Surah e Taha 20, Verse 114)

From now on, make this prayer a part of your routine. Every day, take the time to say it 10 times, 20 times or whatever. At some point in the day, you sit and say, "Oh Allah (swt)! Increase my knowledge."

Student: It's written on my school books.

Teacher: *Alhamdulillah!* Do you understand the true meaning of it? Do you understand the meaning of this verse after these two classes? Please, if somebody doesn't understand, raise your hand. If you do understand, at least say it loudly so that I feel good about it that at least you guys understood something! Do you understand this verse now?

Students: Yes.

Teacher: *Alhamdulillah.* May Allah (swt) increase us in *'Ilm*, give us *tawfeeq* to act upon what we learn and accept from us our learning and our deeds. Ameen.

Du'a for end of a gathering) *Subhana Rabbika Rabbul Izzati 'amma yasifun wa salamun 'alal mursaleen, walhamdulillah Rabbil 'alameen*

(Parting salutation to students) *Assalam alaikum wa rahmatullahi wa Barakatuh*