

What Are the Two Levels of Knowledge?

As powerful as ignorance is, it has an equally powerful antidote: knowledge.

In truth, knowledge is a veritable treasure for man, and a source of glory, of bounty, of joy, of exaltation, of cheer and gladness unto him.¹

Bahá'u'lláh

The light of the people of the world is their knowledge and utterance...²

The Báb

Knowledge here does not refer to the acquisition of facts, but to the *awareness of truth*. Knowledge without love for truth is only thin air:

Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up. I Corinthians 8:1

The two most significant levels of awareness are *knowing*, and *seeing*.

I have *heard* of You by the hearing of the ear, but now my eyes *see* You. Job 42:5

Think of your heart as iron and of truth as acid. Can any interaction take place between the two elements as long as they are kept apart? The same principle applies to knowing. Unless knowledge reaches the stage of "insight," no interaction can ensue. Or think of knowledge as the sun. Can

simply knowing about the sun change your health or your life? No, only when you bask in its light can you be influenced by its powers. Everyone has the potential not only to know God but to see Him, with his or her heart and soul.

Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. Christ (Matt. 5:8)

What happens when the heart is blinded? It turns into a veil.

I dealt with them [Israelites] according to their uncleanness and their offenses, and *hid My Face from them*. Ezekiel 39:24

The main reason religion has little impact on people's lives is that it exists mostly in the stage of knowing. It is rooted in the mind, but not the heart.

Every poll taken in recent years shows that more than 90 percent of Americans believe in God. A recent Gallup poll indicates that "96 percent of Americans believe in God...90 percent believe in heaven...79 percent believe in miracles...and 72 percent believe in angels." And yet crime, violence, abuse, and fraud are rampant.

The most essential knowledge is from and about God. Without the light of that knowledge, which comes through His Messengers, the soul remains in total darkness:

I am the light of the world. Christ (John 9:5)

God hath manifested Me with a light that hath encompassed all that are in the heavens and all that are on earth.³

Bahá'u'lláh

The signs and tokens of the Truth shine even as the midday sun, and yet the people are wandering, aimlessly and perplexedly, in the wilderness of ignorance and folly.⁴

Bahá'u'lláh

The first requirement for living in peace and joy is to decipher the mystery of God—to know Him as intimately as possible. Once that is accomplished, everything else will take care of itself. Only the knowledge of God can give meaning and purpose to our lives.

The beginning of all things is the knowledge of God...⁵

Bahá'u'lláh

True knowledge, therefore, is the knowledge of God, and this is none other than the recognition of His Manifestation in each Dispensation.⁶

The Báb

The source of all learning is the knowledge of God, exalted be His glory, and this cannot be attained save though the knowledge of His Divine Manifestation.⁷

Bahá'u'lláh

"Knowledge is a light which God casteth into the heart of whomsoever He willeth." It is this kind of knowledge which is and hath ever been praiseworthy, and not the limited knowledge that hath sprung

forth from veiled and obscured minds.⁸ Bahá'u'lláh

Knowledge of God reaches and interacts only with pure hearts, just as the rays of the sun glow with full glory and power only in clean mirrors.

As ignorance is the source and essence of all vices, so are knowledge and love for truth the sources and essence of all virtues:

The essence of all that We have revealed for thee is Justice, is for man to free himself from idle fancy and imitation, discern with the eye of oneness His glorious handiwork, and look into all things with a searching eye.⁹ Bahá'u'lláh

In the preceding statement, Bahá'u'lláh singles out five qualities:

- Justice
- Freedom from idle fancy, illusions, or myths
- Freedom from blind conformity and imitation
- The ability to look into everything with a searching eye
- The ability to discern with the eye of oneness, to see the “big picture,” as God does

Only a small minority can fulfill all these requirements. Once again we can see why, throughout all ages, truth has been suppressed and resisted. No wonder so many remain with the religion of their ancestors. If they met all

the preceding requirements, they would have discovered the essential oneness of all great faiths. They would have lived in peace and harmony. They would have recognized the truth of ***One God, Many Faiths; One Garden, Many Flowers.***

1. *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 52.
2. *Selections from the Writings of the Báb*, p. 98.
3. *Epistle to the Son of the Wolf*, p. 96.
4. *The Kitáb-i-Íqán*, p. 239.
5. *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 5.
6. *Selections from the Writings of the Báb*, p. 89.
7. *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 156.
8. *The Kitáb-i-Íqán*, p. 46.
9. *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 157.



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