31887 - She wants to know how to acquire knowledge and act upon it

the question

We as Muslims are obliged to act in accordance with the Book of Allaah and the Sunnah of our Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him). I am keen to do that, in sha Allaah, to earn the pleasure of Allaah, but there is too much fitnah and too many contradictory fatwas and I am confused.
What I want to ask is: how can I know how to act in accordance with the Book of Allaah and the Sunnah of His Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him)?
I want to act in accordance with that which Allaah has revealed and has enjoined. How can I do that, in sha Allaah?
How can I find the rulings and commandments? , I read the Qur'aan and books of seerah and hadeeth. Is there anything that will help me to understand the rulings and prohibitions of Allaah etc. from the Qur'aan and Sunnah?.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

The commands and prohibitions of Allaah are to be found in the Book of Allaah and the Sunnah of His Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him). The scholars have explained that in their books, whether they are books of hadeeth or of fiqh.

Some of the scholars have written books dealing specifically with the verses of rulings (aayaat al-ahkaam); others have written books on the ahaadeeth of rulings (ahaadeeth al-ahkaam). Then there are commentaries on these books and texts, such as Ahkaam al-Qur'aan by al-Jassaas; Nayl al-Awtaar Sharh Muntaqa al-Akhbaar; Subul al_Salaam Sharh Buloogh al-Maraam; Ihkaam al-Ahkaam Sharh 'Umdat al-Ahkaam.

The Muslim can find out the rulings, commands and prohibitions of Allaah in two ways:

1 – From trustworthy books

You can refer to the following questions for more information on the names of trustworthy books: 14082; 20191.

2 – From trustworthy scholars

Shaykh Ibn ‘Uthaymeen said:

There are two ways of acquiring knowledge:

1 – Acquiring it from trustworthy books written by scholars who are known for their knowledge, trustworthiness and sound beliefs, free from innovations and myths.

2 – Acquiring it from a teacher who is trustworthy in terms of his knowledge and religious commitment. This way is quicker and more reliable for knowledge, because in the first method a seeker of knowledge may go astray without realizing, either because he misunderstands or because of a lack of knowledge, or for some other reason. But if a seeker of knowledge combines both methods, that is better and more complete. The student should get his priorities straight, and brief books on various subjects before studying books that deal with them in detail, so that he will move from one level to another, and he will not move on to the next level until he has mastered the one that comes before it, so that his progress will be sound.

Kitaab al-‘Ilm, p. 64, 65

With regard to acting upon what Allaah has revealed, that cannot be done before knowing what Allaah has revealed, So the Muslim must seek knowledge, then when he knows, he must act upon what he has learned.

Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah said:

Abu ‘Abd al-Rahmaan al-Sulami said: Those who used to teach us the Qur’aan, ‘Uthmaan ibn ‘Uthmaan and ‘Abd-Allaah ibn Mas’ood and others, told us that when they learned ten verses from the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him), they would not move on from that until

they learned what was in them of knowledge and put it into practice. They said, so we learned the Qur’aan and knowledge and practice all together.

Al-Hasan al-Basri said that Allaah did not reveal any verse but he wanted to learn concerning what it was revealed and what was meant by it.

Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“Do they not then consider the Qur’aan carefully?”

[al-Nisa’ 4:82]

Considering words is only of benefit if one understands them. Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“Verily, We have made it a Qur’aan in Arabic that you may be able to understand (its meanings and its admonitions)”

[al-Zukhruf 43:3]

The Messengers explained to the people that which was revealed to them from their Lord, and they had to convey it clearly to mankind. What is required of the people is to understand what the Messengers conveyed to them, and understanding implies knowledge and action. Whoever knows (the difference between) good and evil and does not follow good and warn against evil, has not understood. Hence no one can be counted as being a man of understanding unless he does what will benefit him and avoids what will harm him. So the insane person who cannot distinguish between the one and the other may fall into things that will harm him and may run away from things that may benefit him.

Majmoo’ al-Fataawa, 15/108

Acting upon that which has been revealed from Allaah means adhering to the commands and obeying them, and avoiding that which has been forbidden, and believing in what Allaah has told us of stories and seeking lessons from them.

And Allaah knows best.