



Important Guidance

For the Youth of the Ummah

Al-'Allāmah Ash-Shaikh Sālih Ibn Fawzān Al-Fawzān

توجيهات مهمة إلى شباب الأمة

Important Guidance for the Youth of the *Ummah*

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In the Name of Allāh, the Most Merciful, the Bestower of Mercy

There is no doubt that the youth of the *Ummah* are foundations of the human building - upon which this *Ummah* is established. So the youth are the younger generation that will carry the responsibility after their fathers. The youth have within them bodily strength and thinking, they have talents and skills and aptitude that are new and modern that are not present in older people.

The elder folk have wisdom and experience, whilst the youth have strength, preparedness and readiness. So if the youth and the elders were to work together for the advancement of the *Ummah*, much good would be achieved. However, if the youth go their own way, separate from their elders, the devils from the humans and the Jinn would come in between them (to cause mischief). So the side-lining of youth towards other objectives and aims is harmful to the *Ummah*.

The Messenger (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) gave real importance to the affair of young people. He said to his cousin, 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Abbās (رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ) (and he was a young boy at the time):

يَا غُلَامُ إِنِّي أَعَلَّمْتُكَ كَلِمَاتٍ أَحْفَظِ اللهُ يَحْفَظُكَ اللهُ أَحْفَظِ اللهُ تَحِجَّهُ
تُجَاهَكَ إِذَا سَأَلْتَ فَاسْأَلِ اللهُ وَإِذَا اسْتَعْنَيْتَ فَاسْتَعِنْ بِاللَّهِ وَاعْلَمْ أَنَّ
الْأُمَّةَ لَوْ اجْتَمَعَتْ عَلَى أَنْ يَنْفَعُوكَ بِشَيْءٍ لَمْ يَنْفَعُوكَ إِلَّا بِشَيْءٍ ۗ قَدْ كَتَبَهُ

اللَّهُ لَكَ وَلَوْ اجْتَمَعُوا عَلَىٰ أَنْ يَضُرُّوكَ بِشَيْءٍ لَمْ يَضُرُّوكَ إِلَّا بِشَيْءٍ قَدْ
كَتَبَهُ اللَّهُ عَلَيْكَ رُفِعَتِ الْأَقْلَامُ وَجَفَّتِ الصُّحُفُ

“O young boy - surely I will teach you some words: Be mindful of Allāh and He will protect you. Be mindful of Allāh and you will find him in front of you. If you ask, then ask of Allāh alone, and if you are in need, then seek assistance from Allāh alone. Know that even if the whole Ummah (nation) were to gather together to benefit you with something, they could not benefit you except with that which Allāh has already written for you.

The Pens have been lifted and the Pages have dried.”¹

In another narration reported in Tirmidhī and also found in Imām An-Nawawī’s ‘*Forty Hadīth*’, Allāh’s Messenger (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) said:

احْفَظْ اللَّهَ تَجِدُهُ أَمَامَكَ، تَعَرَّفْ إِلَى اللَّهِ فِي الرَّخَاءِ يَعْرِفَكَ فِي الشَّدَةِ،
وَاعْلَمْ أَنَّ مَا أَخْطَاكَ لَمْ يَكُنْ لِيُصِيبِكَ، وَمَا أَصَابَكَ لَمْ يَكُنْ
لِيُخْطِئَكَ، وَاعْلَمْ أَنَّ التَّصَرُّعَ مَعَ الصَّبْرِ، وَأَنَّ الْفَرَجَ مَعَ الْكُرْبِ، وَأَنَّ مَعَ
الْعُسْرِ يُسْرًا

“Remember Allāh in times of ease and prosperity, and He will remember you in times of hardship and adversity. And know; that which has passed you by and missed you, was never going to befall you, and whatever has befallen you was never going to miss you. And know that victory

¹ *Sunan At-Tirmidhī*: 2518

comes with patience, relief comes after affliction and ease comes after hardship.”

So this advice and guidance gathers together tremendous directives for young people with respect to their 'aqīdah, their conduct, their manners, and their utter reliance upon Allāh, and their Ēmān in the Pre-decree - that which has taken place and is to take place. So this is a tremendous encompassing advice.

Anas (رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ) narrated that the Prophet (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) was upon a riding beast, and behind him was Mu'ādh (رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ), so he (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) said:

قَالَ: يَا مُعَاذُ بْنَ جَبَلٍ. قَالَ لَبَّيْكَ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ وَسَعْدَيْكَ. قَالَ: يَا مُعَاذُ.
قَالَ لَبَّيْكَ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ وَسَعْدَيْكَ. ثَلَاثًا. قَالَ: مَا مِنْ أَحَدٍ يَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَأَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صِدْقًا مِنْ قَلْبِهِ إِلَّا حَرَّمَهُ اللَّهُ عَلَى النَّارِ.
قَالَ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ، أَفَلَا أُخْبِرُ بِهِ النَّاسَ فَيَسْتَبْشِرُوا قَالَ إِذَا يَتَكَلَّمُوا. وَأَخْبِرُ
بِهَا مُعَاذٌ عِنْدَ مَوْتِهِ تَأْتِيًا

“O Mu'ādh!” He responded: “At your service and call O Messenger of Allāh.” Then he called again “O Mu'ādh!” He responded: “At your service and call, O Messenger of Allāh.” This occurred three times.

Assured that he had Mu'ādh's full attention, he (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) said to him:

“There is not a servant who declares that there is none who has the right to be worshipped except Allāh and that

Muhammad is the Messenger of Allāh, sincerely from his heart, except that Allāh has made the Hellfire forbidden for him.”

Mu‘adh said: “O Messenger of Allāh. Should I not inform the people and give them this glad tiding?” He (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) replied:

“No, for they will come to rely upon it.”

Mu‘adh mentioned it at the time of his own death to avoid falling into sin.”²

So this is guidance for the youth regarding that which Allāh has obligated upon His creation; that they are to worship Him alone, without partners. This is the purpose of their creation:

وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونِ

“And I created not the Jinn and humans except they that should worship Me alone.”³

So the right of Allāh upon the servants is an obligation, it is mandatory. It is an affair in which there is no choice for them - to do it if they wish or to leave it if they wish. No, rather it is something obligated upon them.

As for the right of the servant upon Allāh, then that is a favour from Allāh, as Allāh is otherwise not obligated to owe anyone

² *Sahīh Al-Bukhārī*: 128 and *Sahīh Muslim*: 32

³ *Sūrah Adh-Dhāriyāt*: 56

anything - rather it is a favour, and the right of the favour with Him is:

أَنْ لَا يُعَذَّبَ مَنْ لَا يُشْرِكُ بِهِ شَيْئًا

“That He will not punish the one who does not worship anything alongside Him.”⁴

This proves that worshipping Allāh alone without any partners (i.e. *Tawhīd*) is a guarantee from destruction - either an absolute guarantee with the meaning that a person will never be punished, or with the meaning that he will not remain in Hell eternally, even if a person is punished for their sins. Such a person will be removed from the Fire and entered into Paradise as long as they were from *Ahlut-Tawhīd* (The People of *Tawhīd*), and they did not associate anyone in worship with Allāh.

It also proves that whoever commits *Shirk* alongside Allāh, then indeed Allāh will punish such a person eternally in Hell having no happiness as Allāh said:

إِنَّهُ مَنْ يُشْرِكْ بِاللَّهِ فَقَدْ حَرَّمَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ الْجَنَّةَ وَمَأْوَاهُ النَّارُ ۖ وَمَا لِلظَّالِمِينَ مِنْ أَنْصَارٍ

“Verily, whosoever sets up partners in worship with Allāh, then Allāh has forbidden Paradise for him, and the Fire will be his abode. And for the wrong-doers, there are no helpers.”⁵

⁴ *Sahīh Al-Bukhārī*: 2856

⁵ *Sūrah Al-Mā'idah*: 72

And He, The Most High, said,

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَغْفِرُ أَنْ يُشْرَكَ بِهِ وَيَغْفِرُ مَا دُونَ ذَلِكَ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ

“Verily, Allāh forgives not that partners should be set up with him in worship, but He forgives lesser than that to whomever He pleases.”⁶

And so the meaning of the Prophet’s (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) saying:

أَنْ لَا يُعَذَّبَ مَنْ لَا يُشْرِكُ بِهِ شَيْئًا

“That He does not punish the one who does not worship anything alongside Him.”⁷ - is that everything that is taken as a partner alongside the worship of Allāh such as a tree, or a stone, or a dead person or a living person, or a Jinn or a human or idols or angels or Messengers or Prophets, or those who are pious - everything that is associated with Allāh in worship, then Allāh will not forgive that person unless they repent - repent to Allāh, seeking His Forgiveness, and return back to pure monotheism, believing in, and worshipping One God, Allāh.

If a person dies upon polytheistic beliefs, then he will remain eternally in Hell. On an occasion, the Prophet (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) spoke to ‘Umar Ibn Abī Salamah (رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمَا), and he was a youth living in the house of the Prophet due to the fact that the Prophet married his mother after the death of Abū Salamah. So this youth (رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ) was

⁶ Sūrah An-Nisā’: 48

⁷ Sahīh Al-Bukhārī: 2856

nurtured and cultivated at the hands of Allāh’s Messenger (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ). So when the food arrived, the Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) said to the youth,

يَا غُلَامُ سَمِّ اللَّهَ، وَكُلْ بِيَمِينِكَ وَكُلْ مِمَّا يَلِيكَ

“O youth, say *Bismillāh*, and eat with your right hand, and eat that which is close to you.”⁸

And the Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) said to the generality of the youth,

يَا مَعْشَرَ الشَّبَابِ مَنِ اسْتَطَاعَ مِنَ الْبَاءَةِ فَلْيَتَزَوَّجْ، فَإِنَّهُ أَغْضُ لِلْبَصْرِ،
وَأَحْصَنُ لِلْفَرْجِ، وَمَنْ لَمْ يَسْتَطِعْ فَعَلَيْهِ بِالصَّوْمِ، فَإِنَّهُ لَهُ وِجَاءٌ

“O young people! Whoever among you can marry, should marry, because it helps him to lower his gaze and guard his modesty. And whoever is not able to marry should fast, as fasting diminishes his passions.”⁹

Allāh’s Messenger (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) here is commanding with protecting oneself from sexual immorality. This can be achieved by marriage if they are able, or if not, then by doing that which weakens and reduces the lusts. That is achieved by fasting out of fear of falling into the *fitnah* [of fornication]. So this is from his serious concern for his nation.

⁸ *Sahīh Al-Bukhārī*: 5376

⁹ *Sahīh Al-Bukhārī*: 5066

These pieces of advice from the Prophet (ﷺ) to the youth hold validity until the Hour is established - and it is obligatory upon the young people to hold fast to them.

Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) also mentioned that from the seven who will be shaded by Allāh's shade on the Day when there will be no other shade is:

شَابٌ نَشَأَ فِي عِبَادَةِ اللَّهِ

“A youth who was raised upon the worship of Allāh.”¹⁰

So if he or she is raised upon the worship of Allāh and is not taken by the flurry and impetuosity of youth, and by the impulses of youth to disobey (so he overcame all of that in obedience to Allāh), he is rewarded with this honour on the Day of Resurrection. Allāh will shade him with His shade on that severely hot day, when the sun is brought close to the heads of those standing and Allāh will shade a group of people with His shade and from them will be the youth who were raised upon the worship of Allāh.

And in another *hadīth*:

“Your Lord is amazed at a youth who does not display behaviour typical of children.”¹¹

This means that he has overcome his childish or teenage tendencies, and his impulses or other affairs that bring out

¹⁰ *Sahīh Al-Bukhārī*: 1423

¹¹ *Musnad Imām Ahmad*: 151/4

impulsive behaviour in youth - so some youth overcome that in obedience to Allāh.

And Allāh is amazed at such a youth because he has excelled in this tremendous distinguishing quality. And the meaning of this is that Allāh will honour him and preserve him in this world.

Look at the saying of Allāh's Messenger (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) to Ibn 'Abbās (رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ):

“Be acquainted with Allāh in times of ease and prosperity and He will be acquainted with you in times of adversity.”¹²

If you worship Allāh and you come close to Him in times of ease and prosperity and then you are afflicted with adversity and grief, surely Allāh will relieve you and save you from that period of constriction and difficulty. From this is seen the obligation placed upon the fathers to cultivate and educate their children - the children will not be rectified except by taking the necessary measures. And the greatest of these measures is to provide a pious cultivation.

So it is a duty upon the parents to cultivate their children upon the obedience of Allāh, and to raise them upon that until they become adults whilst still upon that obedience, and upon fondness and love for it and holding fast to it.

¹² *Musnad Imām Ahmad*: 307/1

However, if the parents disregard their duties towards their children and they are raised upon negligence and neglect and upon the fleeting impulses of youth, then they will be wasted away in society. For this reason, the call of the Prophets was to invite the children and offspring of their nations to Allāh’s worship and to piety.

The Prophet Ibrāhīm (عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام) said:

رَبِّ اجْعَلْنِي مُقِيمَ الصَّلَاةِ وَمِنْ ذُرِّيَّتِي ۚ رَبَّنَا وَتَقَبَّلْ دُعَاءِ

“O my Lord! Make me one who performs the *Salāh* and also my offspring. Our Lord! Accept my invocation.”¹³

And Zakariyyah (عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام) said:

هُنَالِكَ دَعَا زَكَرِيَّا رَبَّهُ ۖ قَالَ رَبِّ هَبْ لِي مِنْ لَدُنْكَ ذُرِّيَّةً طَيِّبَةً ۗ إِنَّكَ سَمِيعُ الدُّعَاءِ

“O my Lord! Grant me from yourself good offspring. You are indeed the All-Hearer of invocation.”¹⁴

He did not merely say: grant me offspring - rather he said: “Good offspring,” because that is the truly desirable offspring.

Allāh’s Messenger (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) said:

¹³ Sūrah Ibrāhīm: 40

¹⁴ Sūrah Āl-‘Imrān: 38

إِذَا مَاتَ الْإِنْسَانُ انْقَطَعَ عَنْهُ عَمَلُهُ إِلَّا مِنْ ثَلَاثَةٍ إِلَّا مِنْ صَدَقَةٍ جَارِيَةٍ
أَوْ عِلْمٍ يُنْتَفَعُ بِهِ أَوْ وَلَدٍ صَالِحٍ يَدْعُو لَهُ

“When the son of Ādam dies, all of his actions come to an end except for three: a continuous charity, knowledge that is benefitted from, and a righteous child who supplicates for him.”¹⁵

All of this continues after his death; and this goodness is shown to the parents whilst they are in old age - the child serves them; the one whom they nurtured - and after their death he supplicates for them.

وَقَضَىٰ رَبُّكَ أَلَّا تَعْبُدُوا إِلَّا إِيَّاهُ وَبِالْوَالِدَيْنِ إِحْسَانًا ۖ إِمَّا يَبُلُغَنَّ عِنْدَكَ
الْكِبَرَ أَحَدُهُمَا أَوْ كِلَاهُمَا فَلَا تَقُلْ لَهُمَا أَفٍّ وَلَا تَنْهَرْهُمَا وَقُلْ لَهُمَا قَوْلًا
كَرِيمًا • وَخَفِضْ لَهُمَا جَنَاحَ الذُّلِّ مِنَ الرَّحْمَةِ وَقُلْ رَبِّ ارْحَمْهُمَا كَمَا
رَبَّيْتَنِي صَغِيرًا

“And your Lord has decreed that you worship none but Him, and that you be dutiful to your parents. If one of them or both of them attain old age in your lifetime, say not to them a word of disrespect, nor shout at them but address them in terms of honour. And lower unto them the wing of submission and humility through mercy and say:

¹⁵ *Sahih Muslim*: 1631

‘My Lord! Bestow upon them your mercy as they did raise me up from when I was small.’”¹⁶

So the children supplicate for their parents due to the righteous cultivation and upbringing, so it becomes a reason for happiness, and goodness is repaid by goodness. So this shows the obligation of showing concern for the children. So when a man (or a woman) intends to marry, then they should seek out and choose a righteous spouse who will cultivate and educate the children upon goodness, because she is the place where the seed is planted and from her comes forth the progeny - so one must choose a good and pious wife to marry. The Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) said:

تُنكَحُ النِّسَاءُ لِأَرْبَعٍ لِمَالِهَا وَلِحَسَبِهَا وَلِجَمَالِهَا وَلِدِينِهَا. فَاظْفَرِ بِذَاتِ
الدِّينِ تَرَبَّتْ يَدَاكَ

“A woman is married for four reasons: her wealth (or property), her lineage, her beauty, and her religion. Marry the one with good religion and you will be successful.”¹⁷

Do not just look at her beauty, nor to her wealth, nor to mere lineage and her station in society - rather look to the religion because the religion encompasses all of goodness.

If one chooses a partner for other than good religion, then it is quite possible that which follows on from the other traits may be dispraise-worthy. She may be deceived by her own beauty; wealth

¹⁶ Sūrah Al-Isrā': 23-24

¹⁷ Sunan Ibn Mājah: 1858

may cause her to transgress and her lineage and social status may cause her to be proud and haughty over the man (so the religion controls and tempers all of that).

As for the woman of good religion, then nothing will appear from her except goodness - and if they are blessed with righteous children, she will guide them and cultivate them upon goodness. Likewise, it is legislated for the father when he is blessed with a child, that he chooses for him a good name and not a hated name, because the name of a person has an effect upon that person. As the saying goes:

‘For each person, there is a share for him in his name.’

The Messenger (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) stated:

إِنَّ أَحَبَّ أَسْمَائِكُمْ إِلَى اللَّهِ عَبْدُ اللَّهِ وَعَبْدُ الرَّحْمَنِ

“The most beloved of your names to Allāh are ‘Abdullāh and ‘Abdur-Rahmān.”¹⁸

This means that he becomes a servant to Allāh by a name of Allāh, such as ‘Abdul-Azīz or ‘Abdur-Rahmān, or ‘Abdullāh or ‘Abdul-Karīm and so on - or he is named Muhammad or ‘Alī or Sālih or other good names. He is not named with a name that causes one’s hearing to be repelled - that is because a name has an effect on the listener and upon the one named.

¹⁸ *Sahīh Muslim*: 2132

For this reason, when Suhail bin ‘Amr came to make reconciliation with the Prophet at Hudaibiyah, and Suhail was a polytheist at that time, the Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) said:

لَقَدْ سَهَّلَ لَكُمْ مِنْ أَمْرِكُمْ

“Now the matter has become easy for you (*Sahula*¹⁹).”²⁰

Meaning that it is a sign that something good will happen and being hopeful of that and this was due to his name ‘Suhail.’ So no doubt having a good name has an effect upon the one who hears it and upon the one named with it.

Also from the rights of the child upon the parent (father) is that he should carry out the ‘*aqīqah*’ by the slaughter of a prescribed animal as an act of worship to Allāh, in gratitude to Him (عَزَّوَجَلَّ), because it is a means of nearness to Allāh and being thankful to Allāh - and it has a good effect upon the new-born due to the fact that there is good in worship. For the boy two sheep are to be slaughtered and for a girl one sheep. This is an established Sunnah and by it, one achieves a good effect upon the new-born child.

Abū Dāwūd reports that Allāh’s Messenger (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) said:

كُلُّ غُلَامٍ رَهِينَةٌ بِعَقِيقَتِهِ

“Every new-born is held in pledge by the ‘*aqīqah*.’”²¹

¹⁹ *Sahula*: means ‘to make easy.’

²⁰ *Sahīh Al-Bukhārī*: 2732

²¹ *Sunan Abū Dāwūd*: 2838

It is slaughtered on the seventh day, and the [baby's] head is shaved and the child named - these are the means of attaining goodness for the new-born and are from the matters pursued by the father for his offspring.

Likewise, it is important for the parents to carry out the commands of the Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) regarding the children such as his saying:

مُرُوا أَوْلَادَكُمْ بِالصَّلَاةِ وَهُمْ أَبْنَاءُ سَبْعِ سِنِينَ وَاصْرِبُوهُمْ عَلَيْهَا وَهُمْ
أَبْنَاءُ عَشْرِ سِنِينَ وَفَرِّقُوا بَيْنَهُمْ فِي الْمَضَاجِعِ

“Command your children with the prayer at the age of seven, and smack them lightly at the age of ten if they do not pray and also separate their beds at that age.”²²

So the father is the shepherd in charge of his flock, and likewise the mother is responsible over her duty of care.

So upon them is to command their children with the prayer once they have reached the age of seven. They command them to pray even though it is not obligatory upon the children themselves to pray at that age. So it is done as this will have a good effect on them due to the fact that they will ponder over it and become accustomed to it.

Also the parents must supervise where they sleep. They are not left to sleep together (under the same covers), so as to avoid any

²² *Sunan Abū Dāwūd*: 495

surfacing of confused desires that bring about evil. So they are kept apart in the beds (from the age of ten). They are not left in one bed and this is a preventative measure, and as they say; prevention is better than cure.

The *Sahābah* carried out these guidelines and implemented them with respect to their children. Youth were raised up from among them, who led the *Ummah* with knowledge, *Jihād*, teaching and calling to Allāh (عَزَّوَجَلَّ); the likes of Ibn 'Abbas, Ibn 'Umar, 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Amr Ibn Al-'Ās, Mu'ādh Ibn Jabal, Zaid Ibn Thābit - these were the youth whose names resound and reverberate throughout history, to this very day. That is because they were raised upon the guidance and direction of the Messenger and upon the cultivation of their parents.

We do not ask our children to be upright and steadfast whilst we neglect them and are lax. Rather we take the means for their rectification and uprightness. As for merely asking them to be upright and pious without us taking the means to achieve that, then that is a waste of effort.

So it is necessary to take the means if you want your youth to be raised upon goodness and uprightness, and raised so that they serve you and serve the *Ummah* in a good way. So show them concern and be patient with what you encounter of fatigue due to them, for all of this is considered as striving in the Path of Allāh. Allāh (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى) said:

وَأْمُرْ أَهْلَكَ بِالصَّلَاةِ وَاصْطَبِرْ عَلَيْهَا

“And enjoin the prayer on your family and be patient upon it.”²³

So being patient is a necessity and merely sitting back whilst wishing that your child becomes steadfast and righteous is not an option! So patience and hope is necessary along with a good intention - and if you carry out the means, then Allāh will not allow the good acts of a person to be wasted. And Allāh, the Most High, said:

وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَاتَّبَعَتْهُمْ ذُرِّيَّتُهُمْ بِإِيمَانٍ أَلْحَقْنَا بِهِمْ ذُرِّيَّتَهُمْ وَمَا أَلَتْنَاهُمْ
مَنْ عَمَلِهِمْ مِنْ شَيْءٍ ۚ كُلُّ امْرِئٍ بِمَا كَسَبَ رَهِينٌ

“And as for those who believe and then their offspring follow them in faith, We will unite them with their offspring and We will not diminish the reward of their deeds at all. Every person is subject to what he has earned.”²⁴

So Allāh will place the children alongside their parents in Paradise because of the fact that their parents raised them upon true faith, obedience, worship and goodness - so the children followed their parents and proceeded upon their methodology. And on the Day of Resurrection, if their parents enter Paradise and the children enter Paradise, and the children are placed in their stations and the parents in even higher stations, then Allāh will show kindness and generosity to the parents and raise their children to those higher stations and vice-versa. If the parents are placed in their stations in

²³ Sūrah Ṭā-Hā: 132

²⁴ Sūrah At-Ṭūr: 21

Paradise and their children in higher stations than them, then Allāh will show kindness to the parents by uniting them with their children in Paradise, in affirmation of, and reward for their support of their children (in raising them upon the Sunnah).

“As for you, O Youth!”

As for you, O youth, then you must pay attention to yourselves first and foremost. Upon you is to seek beneficial knowledge and that is achieved by seeking knowledge at the hands of the scholars whether that be in the schools, the academies of learning, the departments of study at universities or in the mosques. Attend the classes of the scholars who are well-known for knowledge, steadfastness and fear of Allāh (عَزَّوَجَلَّ) - those who are free from strange ideas and speech that contradicts the Sunnah.

Cling to the upright scholars who direct you to that which is sound and correct. Take from their beliefs, knowledge, manners, good conduct, and the sound *Manhaj* (methodology), upon which you base your interaction between yourselves and others, for indeed the scholars are the inheritors of the Prophets. So just as the youth amongst the *Sahābah* learned knowledge from Allāh’s Messenger (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) and from the more learned scholars from the companions, then likewise you are to seek knowledge from the inheritors of Allāh’s Messenger (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ), and they are the Scholars.

Take knowledge from those who possess it whether it be by formal studies or by attending conferences, or lectures or admonitions, or by merely reading beneficial books.

Here we come to two paths that are deviations in learning:

Firstly:

To study books without [the explanations of] the scholars; this is a deviated path and many have gone astray due to it, because they do not understand what is in the books or they understand them in a manner that was not intended due to the fact that they are not explained and clarified for them - or it is possible that an author is astray and misguided in his thoughts and his knowledge so he fills his books with errors!

So this unlearned youth reads these books, adopts them, believes in them - but these books are not to be relied upon. Even those books that are authentic, then you will not understand them in the required fashion. The *Khawārij* with their self-professed intelligence and their apparent piety, did not go astray except due to their dissociating themselves from the scholars and relying upon each other. So they would seek knowledge from each other and thus they harmed themselves, and then the *Ummah*. And this is the result of this dissociation and abandonment of the scholars.

I advise you to busy yourselves with the pursuit of beneficial knowledge at the hands of the scholars and that you leave off disputing regarding the people, and that you abandon backbiting, tale-carrying, criticizing, and spreading stories - for this is a widespread evil that has divided the youth of the *Ummah*. It has made them sects and parties due to this reviling of people.

So there are those to whom nothing is more important than: “so-and-so said this” and “so-and-so said that.” What concern is so-and-so to you? Rather you should seek knowledge until you become acquainted with the truth. As for you trying to dig up the mistakes of the people before you have learned and studied, and you start saying “so-and-so said this” and “so-and-so said that” and “I warn you from so-and-so,” then this methodology is not a correct methodology.

Allāh (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى) said:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِنْ جَاءَكُمْ فَاسِقٌ بِنَبَأٍ فَتَبَيَّنُوا أَنْ تُصِيبُوا قَوْمًا
بِجَهَالَةٍ فَتُصْحَبُوا عَلَيَّ مَا فَعَلْتُمْ نَادِمِينَ

“O you who believe! If a rebellious evil person comes to you with news, verify it, lest you harm people in ignorance, and afterwards you become regretful about what you have done.”²⁵

And how are you to get clarification and verification except by studying beneficial knowledge at the hands of the people of knowledge who are well-known for it.

Secondly:

Be careful and beware, O young people, of the callers to misguidance - for indeed the callers to misguidance in our time are

²⁵ Sūrah Al-Hujurāt: 6

plentiful and the Messenger (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) forewarned the *Ummah* of them when he said:

وَإِنَّمَا أَخَافُ عَلَىٰ أُمَّتِي الْأَيْمَةَ الْمُضِلِّينَ

“Indeed I fear for my *Ummah* the callers to misguidance.”²⁶

i.e. those who lead them to misguidance.

And he said:

“Indeed that which I fear most for my nation is the hypocrite with a rehearsed, eloquent tongue.”²⁷

i.e. That he has eloquence and skill in speech and he is able to spread confusion and doubts and is able to twist the truth, falsifying it and then throwing that at the people; so the ignorant one thinks it is knowledge, and a [religious] evidence, whereas in reality it is no more than a deceitful mirage or illusion.

So upon you is to focus on seeking knowledge and to acquire it from the well-known people of knowledge, and do not just limit yourselves to just reading books or to just listening to audios. Some people seek knowledge by this means, so a person will read books or listen to audio lectures and then say: “*I took knowledge from so-and-so from his book and his audios.*”

²⁶ *Sunan At-Tirmidhī*: 2230, *Sunan Abū Dāwūd*: 4252, *Musnad Imām Ahmad*: 22505 (284/5)

²⁷ *Musnad Imām Ahmad*: 143 (22/1)

This [by itself without sitting] is a huge mistake. Knowledge is taken from the scholars and these books are an aid, an assistance and a means that are taken alongside sitting with the scholars. So the scholar is asked about these books and he explains them, and he clarifies them, clarifying the truth from the errors in them.

So if one of you wanted to study medicine, would you just read books on medicine and then practise it? And then treat the people based on your reading of these books? Perhaps you would end up killing a lot of people by this method, because you are not a physician, rather you are a fake physician.

And there are some narrations threatening the one who pretends to be a physician whilst not knowing medicine. And this is related to medicine, so what about the religion and knowledge? So you have not studied in the correct manner - rather you have learned from audios you have heard, or books you have read.

This is not the path of knowledge. Rather we say: Yes, benefit from the books, and benefit yourself from the audio lectures, but this is alongside your also sitting with the scholars; and they will correct the misunderstandings of what you have read and heard, and you can ask the teacher. Allāh, the Most High, said:

فَاسْأَلُوا أَهْلَ الذِّكْرِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ

“So ask the people of Remembrance if you do not know.”²⁸

²⁸ Sūrah Al-Anbiyā': 7

And the people of Remembrance are the people of knowledge; so do not rely upon your own understanding or on the understanding of one who is similar to you or more ignorant than you - rather it is upon you to ask the people of knowledge. Allāh did not say: “Some of you should ask others from amongst yourselves.” Rather, He said:

فَاسْأَلُوا أَهْلَ الذِّكْرِ

“So ask the people of Remembrance.”

So this is my advice to all young people; that they should focus on seeking beneficial knowledge and that they should seek knowledge from the scholars, trustworthy and reliable in their knowledge and in their fear and duty to Allāh.

Ibn Sīrīn (رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ) (d. 110 AH) stated:

“Indeed this knowledge is religion, so look to whom you take your religion from.”²⁹

So would you take your knowledge from an ignoramus or one who is astray? That would not be correct. Or would you take your religion from a book [without it being explained] - all of this is not good. Do not take your religion except from a pious scholar. Allāh, the Most High, said:

إِنَّمَا يَخُشَى اللَّهَ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ الْعُلَمَاءُ

²⁹ Muqaddimah Sahīh Muslim

“It is only those who have knowledge among His slaves that fear Allāh.”³⁰

So take from the scholars who fear Allāh. So there are two conditions: firstly, that he is a scholar, and secondly, that he fears Allāh.

So a scholar who does not fear Allāh, then do not take from him. And if one fears Allāh but is not a scholar, then likewise do not take from him.

And it has been authentically reported from the Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) that he said:

كَانَ فَيَمَنُ كَانَ قَبْلَكُمْ رَجُلٌ قَتَلَ تِسْعَةَ وَتِسْعِينَ نَفْسًا، فَسَأَلَ عَنْ أَعْلَمَ
أَهْلِ الْأَرْضِ، فَدَلَّ عَلَى رَاهِبٍ، فَأَتَاهُ فَقَالَ: إِنَّهُ قَتَلَ تِسْعَةَ وَتِسْعِينَ نَفْسًا،
فَهَلْ لَهُ مِنْ تَوْبَةٍ؟ فَقَالَ: لَا، فَقَتَلَهُ فَكَمَّلَ بِهِ مِائَةً، ثُمَّ سَأَلَ عَنْ أَعْلَمَ
أَهْلِ الْأَرْضِ، فَدَلَّ عَلَى رَجُلٍ عَالِمٍ فَقَالَ: إِنَّهُ قَتَلَ مِائَةَ نَفْسٍ فَهَلْ لَهُ مِنْ
تَوْبَةٍ؟ فَقَالَ: نَعَمْ، وَمَنْ يَحُولُ بَيْنَهُ وَبَيْنَ التَّوْبَةِ؟ انْطَلِقْ إِلَى أَرْضِ كَذَا
وَكَذَا، فَإِنَّ بِهَا أَنْاسًا يَعْبُدُونَ اللَّهَ تَعَالَى فَاعْبُدِ اللَّهَ مَعَهُمْ، وَلَا تَرْجِعْ إِلَى
أَرْضِكَ فَإِنَّهَا أَرْضُ سُوءٍ، فَانْطَلِقْ حَتَّى إِذَا نَصَفَ الطَّرِيقَ أَتَاهُ الْمَوْتُ،
فَاخْتَصَمَتْ فِيهِ مَلَائِكَةُ الرَّحْمَةِ وَمَلَائِكَةُ الْعَذَابِ. فَقَالَتْ مَلَائِكَةُ
الرَّحْمَةِ: جَاءَ تَائِبًا مَقْبَلًا بِقَلْبِهِ إِلَى اللَّهِ تَعَالَى، وَقَالَتْ مَلَائِكَةُ الْعَذَابِ:
إِنَّهُ لَمْ يَعْمَلْ خَيْرًا قَطُّ، فَأَتَاهُمْ مَلَكٌ فِي صُورَةِ آدَمِي فَجَعَلُوهُ بَيْنَهُمْ - أَيِ

³⁰ Sūrah Fātir: 28

حكما- فَقَالَ: قيسوا مَا بَيْنَ الْأَرْضَيْنِ فَإِلَى أَيْتَهُمَا كَانَ أَدْنَى فَهُوَ لَهُ،
فَقَاسُوا فَوَجَدُوهُ أَدْنَى إِلَى الْأَرْضِ الَّتِي أَرَادَ، فَقَبَضْتَهُ مَلَائِكَةُ الرَّحْمَةِ

“There was a man from among a nation before you who killed ninety-nine people and then made an inquiry about the most learned person on the earth and was directed to a monk. He came to him and told him that he had killed ninety-nine people and asked him if there was any chance for his repentance to be accepted. He replied in the negative and the man killed him also, completing one hundred. He then asked about the most learned man in the land and was was directed to a scholar.

He told him that he had killed one hundred people and asked him if there was any chance for his repentance to be accepted. He replied in the affirmative and said,

‘Who stands between you and repentance? Go to such and such land; there you will find people devoted to the prayer and worship of Allāh. Join them in worship, and do not come back to your land because it is an evil place.’

So he went away and hardly had he covered half the distance when death overtook him; and there was a dispute between the angels of mercy and the angels of torment. The angels of mercy pleaded,

‘This man has come with a repenting heart to Allāh,’

and the angels of punishment argued,

‘He never did a virtuous deed in his life.’

Then there appeared another angel in the form of a human being, and the contending angels agreed to make him arbiter between them. He said,

‘Measure the distance between the two lands. He will be considered belonging to the land to which he is nearer.’

They measured and found him closer to the land of the pious where he intended to go, and so the angels of mercy collected his soul.”³¹

And in another narration in the *Sahīh*:

“And he was closer to the land of the pious by one hand span, and he was made from their people.”

And in another narration in the *Sahīh*:

“Allāh called upon one side to be distant and one side to be closer, and He said: ‘Measure between the two lands.’ And they found him to be closer [to the land of the pious] by a hand span and so He forgave him.”

And in another narration:

“He was closer to it by a chest’s distance.”

All of this good came about due to a question to a scholar. As for the worshipper who is ignorant, then you know what resulted from

³¹ Agreed Upon (*Bukhārī* and *Muslim*).

that; and that is the difference between the answer of an ignorant one and the answer of a scholar. For this reason, Allāh’s Messenger (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) said:

إِنَّ فَضْلَ الْعَالِمِ عَلَى الْعَابِدِ كَفَضْلِ الْقَمَرِ لَيْلَةَ الْبَدْرِ عَلَى سَائِرِ الْكَوَاكِبِ

“The excellence of the scholar over the general worshipper is like the brightness of the full moon over the twinkling of the stars.”³²

So what is the difference between the moon and the stars? The moon illuminates the world for the people with its brightness, whereas the stars only illuminate themselves. And the worshipper’s worship is restricted to himself and he cannot benefit other people with it. As for the scholar then his benefit is widespread just as the illumination of the moon reaches the people – so do not abandon or do without the scholars.

Rather, it is upon you to accept them and to take your questions to them so long as they are amongst you, and do not rely upon your own understanding of affairs or the understanding of the ignoramuses or the imposters who have not studied with the people of knowledge, those who have only studied with those who are like themselves.

These people and those who take from them, then their path is an erroneous path because they do not take knowledge using the correct and sound method. Allāh stated:

³² *Sunan Abū Dāwūd*: 3641

وَلَيْسَ الْبِرُّ بِأَنْ تَأْتُوا الْبُيُوتَ مِنْ ظُهُورِهَا وَلَكِنَّ الْبِرَّ مَنِ اتَّقَى ۗ
وَأْتُوا الْبُيُوتَ مِنْ أَبْوَابِهَا

“It is not from piety that you enter the houses from the back but piety is the quality of the one who fears Allāh. So enter houses through their proper doors.”³³

So knowledge is sought through the correct doors and it is not sought from the highest parts first; rather knowledge is sought in stages, piece by piece; beginning with the easy affairs then through to the difficult ones.

As for those who take knowledge in one fell swoop and approaches it from the highest level, then they do not acquire anything except ignorance and self-delusion - and if only their ignorance and delusion was limited to themselves! However, the problem is that they direct their conduct towards others and they are put to trial and they speak about Allāh and His Messenger (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) without knowledge, and based upon erroneous and incorrect understandings.

So this is a wicked path, yet it is a mode of learning that is much used today. And many of the youth have abandoned the scholars and abandoned taking knowledge from them, and you see what has resulted from this mighty tribulation! And there has arisen those who claim to call to *Jihād* and claim to call to knowledge and there has appeared in the lands destruction, fear, and killing.

³³ Sūrah Al-Baqarah: 189

And all of this is a result of breaking away from the scholars because they scare people away from the scholars, driving them away whilst sending them towards people like themselves from the misguided callers and the people of distorted ideas. So they brainwash the people and indoctrinate them with these ideas - and all of this is a result of breaking away and isolating themselves away from the scholars, from society, from the main body of Muslims, and the Muslim rulers. The Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) informed Hudhaifah Ibn Al-Yāmān (رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ) of the tribulations to come. Hudhaifah asked: “O Messenger of Allāh, what do you command me with if I reach this (*fitnah*)?” He (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) said:

تَلَزِمُ جَمَاعَةَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ وَإِمَامَهُمْ

“To hold fast to the main body of the Muslims and their leader.”³⁴

And this is salvation from the tribulations and calamities, but if you abandon the *Jamā'ah* (main body) of the Muslims, and their ruler, then you will be destroyed by the tribulations just as occurred to those people (the *Khawārij*) and those like them. The Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) said:

“There are three affairs towards which the heart of the believer does not harbour hatred: Maintaining sincerity in actions for Allāh; giving advice to the Muslim ruler, and holding fast to the main body of the Muslims. For

³⁴ *Sahīh Al-Bukhārī*: 7084

verily, the supplication of the rulers encompasses all those behind them.”³⁵

And Allāh stated:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَكُونُوا مَعَ الصَّادِقِينَ

“O you who believe! Fear Allāh, and be with those who are truthful.”³⁶

i.e. Be alongside the *Jamā'ah* (main body) of the believers and the sincere scholars and with the Muslim rulers so that you are saved from tribulations and false ideas. Upon you, O youth, is to carefully utilise your time with that which benefits you in your religious and worldly affairs: in seeking sustenance and provision; in seeking knowledge; and being dutiful to your parents; in fulfilling the obligations and avoiding what is prohibited.

So all of this is binding upon you, for this is the path of salvation. Beware of wasting your time with satellite channels, or with the internet, or with newspapers and magazines that lead to evil and circulation of deviated ideas.

And beware of the callers to misguidance, those who entrap the youth and ensnare them - they seek to cut off the youth from their families, their communities, and then they throw these ideas at them. So you will find a youth isolating himself away from the mosques and from the Friday prayers and congregational prayers. Then it is not known where he has disappeared to until it is

³⁵ *Musnad Imām Ahmad*: 20607 (183/5)

³⁶ *Sūrah At-Tawbah*: 119

announced that he was killed alongside those destructive people, or captured alongside them.

This is the result of negligence, and this is the end result of the young people who do not accept advice, and they do not take the saying of the Messenger (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) in holding fast to the *Jamā'ah* of the Muslims, and the Muslim rulers, and being dutiful to the parents, and serving the parents and in praying the *Jumu'ah* and the congregational prayers. Due to them wasting these matters, they fall into the hands of the enemies and they prompt them with these ideas that bring their lives to an end - to the extent that it is very difficult to cure even the survivors from them, because his intellect has been corrupted and he has been brainwashed. So it is difficult to cure him just like a person who has been afflicted with a disease that has no cure, such as cancer and its like.

Rather the corruption of the mind is more severe than the chronic and terminal illnesses, because the terminal illnesses destroy the body and death is inevitable. However, the illness that afflicts the minds and the thoughts destroys one's religion and beliefs - and after this type of illness there is no happiness ever unless Allāh bestows His bounty upon such a person and he repents to Allāh, and Allāh is fully capable over all things. Having said that, it is difficult upon the likes of these people to repent due to the fact that these wicked ideas have penetrated their minds. Allāh said:

فَلَمَّا زَاغُوا أَزَاغَ اللَّهُ قُلُوبَهُمْ ۗ وَاللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الْفَاسِقِينَ

“So when they deviated from the Path of Allah, Allāh deviated their hearts. And Allāh guides not the wrongdoing people.”³⁷

And this is a punishment for them; otherwise Allāh is fully able to guide them, however He punishes them (due to their deviation from the truth) and prevents them from receiving His guidance.

Why is that? It is because they sinned against the commands of Allāh, so Allāh punished them, and they do not repent and they do not return to the truth, as a punishment from Allāh, alongside the fact that Allāh is fully able to guide them. However, He (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى) prevents them from guidance as a punishment for them.

We ask Allāh for wellbeing and safety. We ask Allāh to make these words easy and to make this sound advice a means of goodness, inshā’Allah. This affair actually requires more than what has been stated, but due to the shortness of time and the numerous questions, we will spend the rest of the time answering questions.

³⁷ Sūrah As-Saf: 5

Selected Questions

Question:

O noble Shaikh, what is your advice to those youths who abstain from the scholars and are distant from them, and from the books of *Salafiyyah* whilst busying themselves with books of deviated ideologies?

Answer:

As I indicated in my talk, it is obligatory upon the youth to turn to the sincere scholars who are well-known for knowledge and steadfastness. And it is the scholars who will direct them to beneficial books and inform them of books that are not suitable.

The one who reads books without a teacher, then he has not taken true advantage from them. The beneficial books are numerous, and all praise is for Allāh, and the best of them is the Book of Allāh; yet not everyone who reads the Book of Allāh understands it.

The *Khawārij* read the Book of Allāh and they seek to establish it, like the establishment of an arrow; and they are known for being people of the Qur'ān. They reverberate with its recitation, like the reverberations and the humming of bees. And they are known for the night prayer; yet they do not understand the Qur'ān.³⁸

³⁸ See *Sahīh Al-Bukhārī*: 5058 and *Sahīh Muslim*: 2456; both of these are the *hadīths* of Abū Sa'īd Al-Khudrī (رضي الله عنه)

So this is a calamity. The affair is not the mere presence of books. If these people do not understand the Qur'ān and they went astray and deviated from the correct path yet they recite Allāh's Book and they recite it in the night prayer, then what would be the case with the other books? So the affair is not about books, rather it is about the scholars.

O slaves of Allāh. The affair is to focus on the scholars; they are the example, they are the inheritors of the Prophets, without the scholars, knowledge does not remain.

And I struck an example for you with the medicine. The books of medicine are present and available, but if there are no physicians present, will the books of medicine benefit? They will not benefit. It is necessary that there are those who are acquainted with them and have expertise. This is in the affair of medicine, so how about the affairs of Islamic Law and knowledge?!

Question:

What is your advice concerning a youth who lives in a home where there is a satellite dish, and television channels? Should he leave the home and stay away from his family, or what should he do?

Answer:

This is a tribulation when the fathers are the ones who bring evils into their own homes – and it is a tribulation for the children. The father is the example, so if the father himself introduces the television channels in to the home, then what are the women and children of the house to think? They will no doubt be ruined.

It is obligatory upon the fathers to cleanse their homes from these corrupt television channels that cause ruination. They should not come before Allāh to be punished for these matters, due to which they were led astray, whilst devoid of knowledge – and they will be ascribed to these ills on the Day of Resurrection. And the head of the home is **‘a shepherd and is responsible for his flock,’** as the Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) stated.

So it is upon the father to keep away from these television channels even if he desires them and inclines to them - out of fear for himself and his children – because this is a responsibility that he has before Allāh and a trust that Allāh has placed upon him.

As for the son, then if he has been put to trial by the father in this matter, then he should advise his father in the best manner. If he accepts the advice, then all praise is for Allāh – and if he does not accept it, then he continues to advise him. However, he stays away and sleeps in a room far away [from the television] and he does not leave the home altogether.

Question:

We have heard that *Jihād* has two conditions that are necessary and must be fulfilled, and they are: The permission of one’s ruler; and the permission of one’s parents. So what is your guidance? May Allāh grant you success... For indeed we have heard from some who have given verdicts to the youth for *Jihād* in Iraq!

Answer:

It is necessary that both conditions are fulfilled, those which the questioner has alluded to. Even if it was said: ‘There is the legislated *Jihād* in Iraq’ – even if that was said, it is still not permissible for you to go there *except* with the pleasure and satisfaction of the father firstly, because his right is obligatory upon you. And secondly, you must have the permission of the ruler since you are his subject and you come under his ruler-ship – and you are obligated with obedience to him. Allāh, the Most High, said:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُوا الرَّسُولَ وَأُولِي الْأَمْرِ مِنْكُمْ

“O you who believe, obey Allāh and obey the Messenger, and those amongst you who are in authority.”³⁹

The rulers, those in authority, know the affairs of politics; that which is beneficial and harmful. So they are capable of such matters by the authority of the responsibility that they have. So you are required to stay with the *Jamā'ah* (the body of Muslims under the ruler), and to remain with your parents – and under the obedience of the ruler. There is no harm or objection in you supplicating for your brothers and fellow Muslims in any place: in Iraq and other than it. Supplicate for them that they are aided and supported.

[Translator’s Note: None of the scholars of *Ahlu-Sunnah* (*Salafiyyah*) issued verdicts that a Muslim should travel to Iraq or Syria for *Jihād*. Indeed, to the contrary, they issued *fatwas* stating that these are not

³⁹ Sūrah An-Nisā’: 59

places of *Jihād*. Furthermore, the Muslim rulers entered into a coalition of forces to wage a true *Jihād* against the extremists and terrorists (such as ISIS) who are operating in Iraq and Syria. Those who have given verdicts to the youth to join the insurgents are not considered to be from *Ahlu-Sunnah*, even if they claim it for themselves.]

Question:

How does one begin seeking religious knowledge?

Answer:

This matter is clear if you have embarked upon formal studies [in an institution]: the texts that are studied within it are chosen by the scholars; that you study and memorise and you understand, and in that there is much benefit. So you begin at the elementary level, and you finish in the fourth year of the Department of *Shari'ah*, or in the final year of higher studies. And in that there is much good.

However, if you are outside of formal studies, then you should seek out a scholar from whom you can benefit - and he must be trustworthy and reliable (well-known), and you sit with him, even if he is in a land other than yours. And in these times, *alhamdulillah*, the means of travel are present and swift, and the paths are safe.

So upon you is to travel to the scholars wherever they may be. The scholars of old, as you can read in the biographies, would travel by foot for months; covering great distances. They would travel to Yemen, Shām, Egypt, Morocco (and the western Islamic world) in

search of knowledge, and they would emigrate from their own countries. A Companion left Madinah for Egypt to ask about one *hadīth* from a Companion who lived there. He went to him for just one *hadīth*. So travelling to seek knowledge is from *Jihād* in the Path of Allāh.

Question:

What is your advice in the affair of obedience to those in authority? And what is the ruling on backbiting them in gatherings and so on? And what is the correct stance towards the scholars of the *Ummah*? May Allāh grant you success.

Answer:

Allāh is the One who directs us with His Saying:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُوا الرَّسُولَ وَأُولِي الْأَمْرِ مِنْكُمْ

“O you who believe! Obey Allāh and obey the Messenger, and those of you who are in authority.”⁴⁰

And the Prophet (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) said:

وَمَنْ يُطِيعِ الْأَمِيرَ فَقَدْ أَطَاعَنِي، وَمَنْ يَعُصِ الْأَمِيرَ فَقَدْ عَصَانِي

“He who obeys the leader, obeys me, and he who disobeys the leader, disobeys me.”⁴¹

⁴⁰ Sūrah An-Nisā': 59

So it is obligatory to obey them in that which is good, and it is not permitted to rebel against them. It is not allowed to disobey them, unless they command with disobedience. In that case they are not obeyed in that particular act of disobedience. So they are obeyed in that which is not sinful and they are not opposed, or indicted or accused. However, do not commit any act of sin they command you with.

The meaning of this *hadīth* is not that you are to rebel against them and say: “There is no authority for them.” Rather, there is for them authority and ruler-ship, and you must obey them in that which does not involve sin, and you are to avoid disobedience. And the same applies to the scholars - you are to respect them and honour them because they are the inheritors of the Prophets. And if you were to revile them or backbite them, then you have reviled and backbitten the inheritors of the Prophets (عَلَيْهِمُ السَّلَامُ).

Allāh stated regarding a people who spoke ill of the scholars and backbit them:

وَلَئِن سَأَلْتَهُمْ لَيَقُولُنَّ إِنَّمَا كُنَّا نَخُوضُ وَنَلْعَبُ ۚ قُلْ أِبَاللّٰهِ وَآيَاتِهِ وَرَسُولِهِ
 كُنْتُمْ تَسْتَهْزِئُونَ • لَا تَعْتَذِرُوا قَدْ كَفَرْتُمْ بَعْدَ إِيمَانِكُمْ

“If you ask them, they declare: “We were only talking idly and joking.” Say: “Was it at Allāh, and His Āyāt (signs) and His Messenger that you were mocking?”

⁴¹ *Sahīh Al-Bukhārī*: 2957

Make no excuse; you have disbelieved after you had believed.”⁴²

So the matter is not trivial, because honouring the scholars is to give honour to knowledge, and to honour knowledge is to honour the Messenger (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ), because this is his inheritance, it is his knowledge. So it is not permitted to backbite or scandalize or to carry tales in general amongst the Muslims, and to do so regarding the scholars and the rulers of the Muslims is even worse, because that is backbiting and it is rebellion and that is a major sin.

And this *is* considered rebellion - a rebellion does not necessitate the carrying of weapons against the ruler. Rather if you speak against them and you belittle their affair in front of the people, and you lower their station, then this is a type of rebellion against the leaders in authority.

⁴² Sūrah At-Tawbah: 65-66