

**“LEARN THE KNOWLEDGE (OF ISLAM) BEFORE IT IS
TAKEN AWAY, AND IT WILL BE TAKEN AWAY BY
THE DEATH OF THE SCHOLARS.”**

By Abu Khadeejah ‘Abdul-Wāhid Alam

All praise is due to Allah, the Lord of all creation; may Allah extol the mention of our noble Prophet Muhammad in the highest company of Angels and give him peace and security—and his family, his Companions and all those who follow him correctly until the establishment of the Hour.

Allah (تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى) made the stars in the sky as guides for travellers in the night:

وَبِالنَّجْمِ هُمْ يَهْتَدُونَ ﴿١٦﴾

“And by the stars, they guide themselves [during the night].” (*an-Nahl*: 16) And Allah has made stars in the earth those who are guides that direct the people to the Straight Path, and they are the scholars. Allah stated:

وَجَعَلْنَاهُمْ أَيْمَةً يَهْدُونَ بِأَمْرِنَا وَأَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْهِمْ فِعْلَ الْخَيْرَاتِ

“And We made them leaders, guiding mankind by Our command, and We inspired them to do good deeds...” (*al-Anbiyā*, 21:73)

The scholars are bright lamps and stars that guide people out from darkness where they stumble and fall. They extinguish the calls of the misguided ones and the people of desires (*ahlul-dalāl wal-hawā*). They illuminate the Right Path from the deviated paths for those who sincerely seek the truth. By way of the scholars (*‘ulamā*), Allah guides people to a happy life and to the purification of their souls from sin and corruption. Ibn al-Qayyim (d. 752H) stated in *I‘lām al-Muwaqqi‘in*:

فَصَلِّ: فَقَهَاءُ الْإِسْلَامِ وَمَنْزِلَتُهُمْ

“Chapter: The Scholars of Islam and their Status.”

فَهُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ بِمَنْزِلَةِ النُّجُومِ فِي السَّمَاءِ. بِهِمْ يَهْتَدِي الْخَيْرَانُ فِي الظُّلُمَاءِ. وَحَاجَةُ النَّاسِ إِلَيْهِمْ أَكْثَرُ مِنْ حَاجَتِهِمْ إِلَى الطَّعَامِ وَالشَّرَابِ. وَطَاعَتُهُمْ أَفْرَضُ عَلَيْهِمْ مِنْ طَاعَةِ الْأُمَّهَاتِ وَالْأَبَاءِ بِنَصِّ الْكِتَابِ قَالَ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى

“The scholars on earth have the same station as the stars in the sky—the bewildered ones are guided by way of them in the depths of darkness. The need of the

people for them is greater than their need for food and drink. And obedience to them holds a greater obligation than obedience to their mothers and fathers according to the text of the Book where Allah has said:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا أَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُوا الرَّسُولَ وَأُولِيَ الْأَمْرِ
مِنْكُمْ ۖ فَإِن تَنَزَعْتُمْ فِي شَيْءٍ فَرُدُّوهُ إِلَى اللَّهِ وَالرَّسُولِ إِن كُنتُمْ
تُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ ۚ ذَلِكَ خَيْرٌ وَأَحْسَنُ تَأْوِيلًا ﴿٥٩﴾

‘O you who believe, obey Allah, and obey the Messenger, and those of you who are in authority. And if you differ in anything amongst yourselves, refer it to Allah and His Messenger if you believe in Allah and the Last Day. That is better and more suitable for final determination.’ (*an-Nisā*’ 4:59)

قَالَ عَبْدُ اللَّهِ بْنُ عَبَّاسٍ فِي إِحْدَى الرَّوَايَتَيْنِ عَنْهُ وَجَابِرُ بْنُ عَبْدِ
اللَّهِ وَالْحُسَيْنُ الْبَصْرِيُّ وَأَبُو الْعَالِيَةِ وَعَطَاءُ بْنُ أَبِي رِبَاحٍ وَالضَّحَّاكُ
وَمُجَاهِدٌ فِي إِحْدَى الرَّوَايَتَيْنِ عَنْهُ: أُولُو الْأَمْرِ هُمُ الْعُلَمَاءُ وَهُوَ
إِحْدَى الرَّوَايَتَيْنِ عَنِ الْإِمَامِ أَحْمَدَ.

‘Abdullāh Ibn ‘Abbās (رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمَا) said in one of the two reports from him, also Jābir Ibn ‘Abdillāh, al-Hasan al-Basrī, Abul-‘Āliyah, ‘Atā’ Ibn Abī Rabāh, ad-Dahhāk and Mujāhid in a one of two reports from him: **‘Those in**

authority are the scholars.’ And this position is also reported in one of the two narrations from *Imām Ahmad*.

وَقَالَ أَبُو هُرَيْرَةَ وَابْنُ عَبَّاسٍ فِي الرَّوَايَةِ الْأُخْرَى وَزَيْدُ بْنُ أَسْلَمَ
وَالسُّدِّيُّ وَمُقَاتِلٌ: هُمُ الْأُمَرَاءُ. وَهُوَ الرَّوَايَةُ الثَّانِيَةُ عَنْ أَحْمَدَ: طَاعَةُ
الْأُمَرَاءِ تَابِعَةٌ لِمَطَاعَةِ الْعُلَمَاءِ.

Abu Hurayrah and Ibn ‘Abbās (رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمَا) stated in another narration, and likewise Zayd Ibn Aslam, as-Suddī and Muqātil: ‘They (i.e., the scholars) are the leaders.’ And in a second report from Ahmad, he said: ‘Obedience to the rulers follows on from and is contingent on obedience to the scholars.’

وَالْتَحْقِيقُ أَنَّ الْأُمَرَاءَ إِنَّمَا يُطَاعُونَ إِذَا أَمَرُوا بِمُقْتَضَى الْعِلْمِ.
فَطَاعَتُهُمْ تَبَعٌ لِمَطَاعَةِ الْعُلَمَاءِ. فَإِنَّ الطَّاعَةَ إِنَّمَا تَكُونُ فِي
الْمَعْرُوفِ وَمَا أَوْجَبَهُ الْعِلْمُ. فَكَمَا أَنَّ طَاعَةَ الْعُلَمَاءِ تَبَعٌ لِمَطَاعَةِ
الرَّسُولِ. فَطَاعَةُ الْأُمَرَاءِ تَبَعٌ لِمَطَاعَةِ الْعُلَمَاءِ. وَلَمَّا كَانَ قِيَامُ الْإِسْلَامِ
بِطَائِفَتِي الْعُلَمَاءِ وَالْأُمَرَاءِ وَكَانَ النَّاسُ كُلُّهُمْ لَهُمْ تَبَعًا. كَانَ صَلَاحُ
الْعَالَمِ بِصَلَاحِ هَاتَيْنِ الطَّائِفَتَيْنِ وَفَسَادُهُ بِفَسَادِهِمَا. كَمَا قَالَ عَبْدُ
اللَّهِ بْنُ الْمُبَارَكِ وَغَيْرُهُ مِنَ السَّلَفِ: صِنْفَانِ مِنَ النَّاسِ إِذَا صَلَحَا

صَلَحَ النَّاسُ وَإِذَا فَسَدَا فَسَدَ النَّاسُ. قِيلَ مَنْ
هُمْ. قَالَ الْمُلُوكُ وَالْعُلَمَاءُ.

This means that the rulers are shown obedience if they command with that which agrees with the knowledge (i.e., the Sharī‘ah)—so obedience to them follows on from and is contingent upon obedience to the people of knowledge. And obedience is only in that which is correct, and in that which is obligated by the knowledge. Likewise, obedience to the scholars follows on from and is contingent upon obedience to the Messenger (ﷺ), and obedience to the rulers follows on from and is contingent upon obedience to the scholars. The religion, therefore, is established by way of these two groups: the scholars and the rulers—and the people, all of them, follow their lead.

Furthermore, the rectification of the world is through the rectification of these two groups—and its corruption occurs when these two groups become corrupt just as ‘Abdullāh Ibn Mubārak (d. 181 H) and other early scholars of the Salaf said: **‘There are two groups from the people, if they are rectified, the people will be rectified but if they are corrupt, the people will be corrupt.’** It was said: **‘Who are they?’** He replied: **‘The kings and the scholars.’”**

The great scholars of Islam are the preservers and memorisers of the Prophetic Tradition, the defenders, and protectors of the ‘Aqeedah (Creed) and Minhāj (Methodology) of the Prophet (ﷺ) and his Companions—those who stood firm against the people of innovation, refuted them, and warned against them—they are the erudite brilliant men and leaders of this Ummah.

وَهُمْ الَّذِينَ قَالَ فِيهِمْ الْإِمَامُ أَحْمَدُ بْنُ حَنْبَلٍ فِي خُطْبَتِهِ الْمَشْهُورَةِ فِي كِتَابِهِ فِي الرَّدِّ عَلَى الزَّانِدِيقَةِ وَالْجَاهِمِيَّةِ:

It is about them whom Imām Ahmad Ibn Hanbal (d. 241 H رَحِمَهُ اللَّهُ) spoke in his famous work *ar-Raddu ‘alaz-Zanādiqah wal-Jahmiyyah* when he said:

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي جَعَلَ فِي كُلِّ زَمَانٍ فِتْرَةً مِنَ الرُّسُلِ بَقَايَا مِنْ أَهْلِ الْعِلْمِ يَدْعُونَ مَنْ ضَلَّ إِلَى الْهُدَى. وَيُصِرُّونَ مِنْهُمْ عَلَى الْأَذَى. وَيُخَيِّونَ بِكِتَابِ اللَّهِ تَعَالَى الْمَوْتَى. وَيُبَصِّرُونَ بِنُورِ اللَّهِ أَهْلَ الْعَمَى. فَكَمْ مِنْ قَتِيلٍ لِإِبْلِيسَ قَدْ أَحْيَوْهُ. وَكَمْ مِنْ ضَالٍّ تَابَ قَدْ هَدَوْهُ. فَمَا أَحْسَنَ أَثَرَهُمْ عَلَى النَّاسِ وَمَا أَفْبَحَ أَثَرِ النَّاسِ عَلَيْهِمْ. يَنْفُونَ عَنِ كِتَابِ اللَّهِ تَحْرِيفَ الْغَالِينَ وَاتِّحَالَ الْمُبْطِلِينَ وَتَأْوِيلِ الْجَاهِلِينَ. الَّذِينَ عَقَدُوا أَلْوِيَّةَ الْبِدْعَةِ. وَأَظْلَقُوا عَنَانَ الْفِتْنَةِ. فَهُمْ

مُخْتَلِفُونَ فِي الْكِتَابِ مُخَالِفُونَ لِلْكِتَابِ مُجْمِعُونَ عَلَى مُفَارَقَةِ
الْكِتَابِ. يَقُولُونَ عَلَى اللَّهِ وَفِي اللَّهِ وَفِي كِتَابِ اللَّهِ بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ.
يَتَكَلَّمُونَ بِالْمُتَشَابِهِ مِنَ الْكَلَامِ. وَيَخْدَعُونَ جُهَّالَ النَّاسِ بِمَا
يُشَبِّهُونَ عَلَيْهِمْ. فَنَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنْ فِتْنَةِ الْمُضِلِّينَ.

“All praise is due to Allah who raises up in every age between the [sending of the] Messengers vestiges from the people of knowledge who call the astray ones to guidance—they patiently bear the harm that they receive from them—they give life through the Book of Allah, the Most High, to the dead—they give sight to the blind by the light of Allah. How many that have been killed by Iblis have they brought back to life? How many astray ones have they guided aright? Look how beautiful their effect has been upon the people and look how wicked the people have been to them.

They expel from the Book of Allah the distortions of those who go beyond bounds, the lies of the falsifiers and the false interpretations of the ignorant ones—those who raise the banner of innovation, who let loose the reigns of tribulation (*fitnah*). They differ concerning the Book (of Allah), they oppose the Book—and they are united in their dividing from the Book. They speak about Allah and concerning the Book of Allah without

knowledge—they talk with ambiguous, vague, and unclear speech—and they deceive the ignorant people with doubts that they throw at them. We seek refuge with Allah from the trials of the misguided.”

When these great scholars pass away and die, and the people are not left with anyone to turn to, they go astray and are destroyed—they rely upon the ignorant among them for information about Islam, so Shaytān misguides them. ‘Abdullāh Ibn ‘Amr Ibn al-‘Ās (رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمَا) narrated that the Messenger of Allah (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) said:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَقْبِضُ الْعِلْمَ انْتِزَاعًا يَنْتَزِعُهُ مِنَ الْعِبَادِ. وَلَكِنْ يَقْبِضُ الْعِلْمَ بِقَبْضِ الْعُلَمَاءِ حَتَّى إِذَا لَمْ يُبْقِ عَالِمًا. اتَّخَذَ النَّاسُ رُءُوسًا جُهَالًا فَسُيِلُوا فَأَفْتَوْا بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ. فَضَلُّوا وَأَضَلُّوا.

“Allah does not take away the knowledge by snatching it from the hearts of the people but takes it away by the death of the scholars until not one of them remains. Then, the people will take as their leaders, ignorant persons who when asked will give their verdict without knowledge. So, they will go astray and will lead the people astray.”¹

¹ Bukhārī, no. 100, Muslims, no. 2673 and others.

In a narration of al-Bukhārī (no. 7307), he (ﷺ) said:

فَيَبْقَى نَاسٌ جُهَالٌ يُسْتَفْتَوْنَ فَيُفْتَوْنَ بِرَأْيِهِمْ. فَيُضِلُّونَ وَيَضِلُّونَ.

“Then there will remain ignorant people who, when consulted, will give verdicts according to their opinions—they will mislead others and go astray.”

Al-Bukhārī (رَحِمَهُ اللهُ) prefaces the above reports with the heading:

بَابُ كَيْفَ يُقْبَضُ الْعِلْمُ

“How knowledge will be taken away.” Then he narrated:

وَكَتَبَ عُمَرُ بْنُ عَبْدِ الْعَزِيزِ إِلَى أَبِي بَكْرٍ بْنِ حَزْمٍ انْظُرْ مَا كَانَ مِنْ حَدِيثِ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فَاكْتُبْهُ. فَإِنِّي خِفْتُ دُرُوسَ الْعِلْمِ وَذَهَابَ الْعُلَمَاءِ. وَلَا تَقْبَلْ إِلَّا حَدِيثَ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ. وَلْتَفْشُوا الْعِلْمَ. وَلْتَجْلِسُوا حَتَّى يُعَلَّمَ مَنْ لَا يَعْلَمُ. فَإِنَّ الْعِلْمَ لَا يَهْلِكُ حَتَّى يَكُونَ سِرًّا.

“Umar Ibn ‘Abdul-‘Azīz (d. 101 H) wrote to Abu Bakr Ibn Hazm saying, ‘Search for the *ahādīth* (traditions) of Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) and write them down for I am afraid that knowledge will vanish, and the scholars

will pass away. Do not accept anything but the narrations of the Prophet (ﷺ)—and spread knowledge—sit and teach the one who does not know, for knowledge does not vanish except when it is kept secret.”

The Prophet (ﷺ) warned us of the ignorant callers who will seek to replace the scholars:

فَيَبْقَى نَاسٌ جُهَالٌ يُسْتَفْتَوْنَ فَيُفْتَوْنَ بِرَأْيِهِمْ. فَيُضِلُّونَ وَيَضِلُّونَ.

“Then there will remain ignorant people who, when consulted, will give *Fatwas* according to their opinions—they will mislead others and go astray themselves.”

So, he (ﷺ) explained that from greatest of reasons for evil and misguidance in the Ummah is the death of the scholars—and also people abandoning their scholars, and taking the ignorant ones, the foolish and deviated misguided innovators as their leaders and reference points in religion. They speak with their opinions and desires, not with the *ahādīth* of Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ)—they do not study the books of ‘*Aqeedah* of the Salaf—and if they do read them, they not act upon them nor call to them. These are callers standing at the Gates of Hell—they do not act upon the

the *Manhaj* of the Salaf²—instead they wait for the scholars to die, or they disconnect the people from them, and they take every opportunity to lead more and more people astray. Their goal is to have their own group, a large following, status, fame, and wealth—and once these evil traits are ingrained in the soul of a human, the heart has been killed by *Iblīs*.

So, it is upon you, O servants of Allah, to seek knowledge before it is taken away. *Al-Imām* ‘Abdullāh Ibn ‘Abdur-Rahmān ad-Dārimī as-Samarqandi (d. 255 H) reported in *al-Musnad*, better known as *as-Sunan* (no. 144):

أَخْبَرَنَا أَبُو الْمُغِيرَةِ حَدَّثَنَا الْأَوْزَاعِيُّ عَنْ يَحْيَى بْنِ أَبِي كَثِيرٍ عَنْ أَبِي قِلَابَةَ قَالَ: قَالَ عَبْدُ اللَّهِ بْنُ مَسْعُودٍ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ تَعَلَّمُوا الْعِلْمَ قَبْلَ أَنْ يُقْبَضَ. وَقَبْضُهُ أَنْ يَذْهَبَ أَهْلُهُ. أَلَا وَإِيَّاكُمْ وَالتَّنَطُّعَ وَالتَّعَمُّقَ وَالْبِدَعَ وَعَلَيْكُمْ بِالْعَتِيقِ.

‘Abdullāh Ibn Mas‘ūd (رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ) said, “**Learn knowledge (of the Religion) before it is taken away—and it is be taken away by the death of its people (i.e., the scholars). And beware of going to extremes, delving**

² Though they may claim they are upon the *Sunnah* and the *madhhab* of the *Salaf* in order to gather a following.

**deeply into matters, and beware of innovations—
upon you is to cling to the old way.”³**

This *old way* is the *Minhāj* of the Sunnah of the Prophet (ﷺ) and his Companions:

وَعَنْ أَبِي وَاقِدٍ اللَّيْثِيِّ قَالَ: إِنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ - وَنَحْنُ جُلُوسٌ عَلَى بَسَاطٍ: إِنَّهَا سَتَكُونُ فِتْنَةً. قَالُوا: كَيْفَ نَفْعَلُ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ

قَالَ: فَرَدَّ يَدَهُ إِلَى الْبَسَاطِ فَأَمْسَكَ بِهِ. قَالَ: تَفْعَلُونَ هَكَذَا. وَذَكَرَ لَهُمْ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَوْمًا أَنَّهَا سَتَكُونُ فِتْنَةً. فَلَمْ يَسْمَعْهُ كَثِيرٌ مِنَ النَّاسِ. فَقَالَ مُعَاذٌ: تَسْمَعُونَ مَا يَقُولُ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ.

قَالُوا: مَا قَالَ. قَالَ: يَقُولُ: إِنَّهَا سَتَكُونُ فِتْنَةً. قَالُوا: فَكَيْفَ لَنَا يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ. أَوْ كَيْفَ نَصْنَعُ. قَالَ: تَرْجِعُونَ إِلَى أَمْرِكُمُ الْأَوَّلِ.

Abu Wāqid al-Laithi (رضي الله عنه) said: “Whilst we were sitting with the Prophet (ﷺ) on a rug spread out, he said: ‘Indeed there will be *fitnah*!’ It was

³ Ad-Dārimī with the explanation *Fathul-Mannān* 2/115, *Al-Musannaf* of ‘Abdur-Razzāq 11/252, *Jāmi‘ Bayān Al-‘Ilm wa Fadlihi* 1/152, *Al-‘Amr bil-Ittibā‘* p. 59.

said: **‘How should we behave O Allah’s Messenger?’** So, he took firm hold of the rug and said: **‘You will behave like this!’**”

In another narration from Mu‘ādh Ibn Jabal (رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ), Allah’s Messenger (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) said: **‘Indeed there will be *fitnah*!’** But the people were not listening, so Mu‘ādh (رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ) said: **‘Did you not hear what Allah’s Messenger said?’** They asked: **‘What did he say?’** He said: **‘Indeed there will be *fitnah*.’** So, they asked: **‘How should we conduct ourselves, O Messenger of Allah?’** He replied: **‘You should return back to the affair as it was in the beginning.’**”⁴

Today we see people calling to unite the Muslim *Ummah* because they see within it groups, divisions, and partisanship—but because they have abandoned the Methodology and the Path of the Salaf, all they achieve is further division, controversy and differing! In all the decades they’ve spent in this mission, what have they achieved of unity? The answer is, nothing.

Yet, they are all united in their mantra, **‘the Salafis divide the *Ummah*!’** So, what unification of the *Ummah* have they brought? They have not brought to the

⁴ At-Tabarānī in *al-Kabīr* no. 3307, *al-Awsat* no. 8679 and graded *sahīh* by al-Albānī in *as-Sahīhah*, no. 3165.

people the ‘*Aqeedah* of the *Sahābah*, nor their Methodology, and nor their piety—and they have not increased except in misguidance, weakness, and further disunity.

Rather after all these centuries, it is the Salafis alone—i.e., *ahlus-Sunnah wal-Jamā‘ah*, and they are *ahlul-Hadīth wal-Athar*—that remain united upon the original way, the Path of the *Sahābah*, and they have never ceased calling to that.

So, it is upon you, O Muslims, to seek out knowledge, to recognise the scholars, to visit them, and to benefit from them and their students, and especially the elders among them. Allah raises in rank the people of knowledge:

يَرْفَعُ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا مِنْكُمْ وَالَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْعِلْمَ دَرَجَاتٍ ۚ وَاللَّهُ
بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرٌ ﴿١١﴾

“Allāh will raise those who have believed among you and those who were given knowledge, by degrees.

And Allāh is Aware of what you do.” (*al-Mujādilah*,

58:11) Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) has obligated upon the *Ummah* to honour the Scholar:

لَيْسَ مِنَّا مَنْ لَمْ يُجَلِّ كَبِيرَنَا وَيَرْحَمْ صَغِيرَنَا وَيَعْرِفْ لِعَالِمِنَا حَقَّهُ

“He is not from us who do not honour our elder one, have mercy on our young one and does not acknowledge the right due our scholar.”⁵

Imām as-Sa‘dī (رَحِمَهُ اللهُ) said: “From the ‘*Aqeedah of ahlus-Sunnah wal-Jamā‘ah* is that they show obedience to Allah by showing respect to the guided scholars—meaning that they seek nearness to Allah by respecting the scholars, extolling them and protecting their honour.”

The presence of scholars is a bounty from Allah and from His Mercy, and their passing away is a tragedy that afflicts the earth and its people. It is a trial for the *Ummah* when their scholars die—their absence gives rise to calamities, and it is a sign of the Last Hour.

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

إِنَّ مِنْ أَشْرَاطِ السَّاعَةِ أَنْ يُرْفَعَ الْعِلْمُ وَيَثْبُتَ الْجَهْلُ وَيُشْرَبَ الْخَمْرُ
وَيُظْهَرَ الزَّانَا.

“From among the signs of the Hour are that (1) knowledge will be taken away, (2) ignorance will become established, (3) drinking of alcohol will be

⁵ Ahmad, al-Hākim, graded *hasan* by al-Albānī, see *Sahīh al-Jāmi‘*, no. 5443.

prevalent, (4) and fornication will be become widespread.”⁶

This is the end-result of the disappearance of the scholars and callers to Allah—with their deaths, knowledge disappears, those who act righteously become scarce and corruption spreads. True scholars teach the people and act upon what they call to—they do not seek fame and status, they do not fear poverty, they enjoin the good and forbid the evil according to the Sunnah without fearing the blame of those who oppose them and ridicule them.

It is a fact that whichever land has few scholars, and few *du‘āt* who call to Tawheed and Sunnah, the more its people will be engrossed in sins until the worst of lands in immorality, disobedience and transgression is where there are no people of knowledge of Sunnah, Hadīth and Salafiyyah. These are the lands where the ignorant, misguided innovators and sinners hold reign because the people take them as leaders and consult with them, leading them further and further astray—and we seek Allah’s refuge from that.

⁶ Al-Bukhārī, no. 80.

The people of Sunnah weep over the loss of their scholars and callers to Allah, and are saddened because they know what the world has lost—but the ignorant one does not know what the world has lost, so he wanders around in blindness—may Allah guide the Muslims!

قال الآجری -رحمه الله- فما ظنكم -رحمكم الله- بطريق فيه آفات كثيرة. ويحتاج الناس إلى سلوكه في ليلة ظلماء. فإن لم يكن فيه ضياء وإلا تحيروا. فقيض الله لهم فيه مصابيح تضيء لهم. فسلكوه على السلامة والعافية. ثم جاءت طبقات من الناس. لا بد لهم من السلوك فيه فسلكوا. فبينما هم كذلك إذ طفئت المصابيح. فبقوا في الظلمة. فما ظنكم بهم. هكذا العلماء في الناس. لا يعلم كثير من الناس كيف أداء الفرائض ولا كيف اجتناب المحارم ولا كيف يعبد الله في جميع ما يعبد به خلقه إلا ببقاء العلماء. فإذا مات العلماء تحير الناس ودرس العلم بموتهم وظهر الجهل.

Al-Imām al-Ājurī (رَحِمَهُ اللهُ) said: “Can you imagine, may Allah’s mercy be upon you, if there was a path with many dangers but the people had to travel that path in the deepest darkness of the night—and if they do not

have a light, they will walk without direction and in confusion. So, Allah sends to them lamps that light up their path. So, they walk upon it in safety and wellbeing. Then there comes along a next group of people, and they must walk the same path, so they do so—but as they are walking, the lamps are extinguished—so they are thrown into darkness. So, what do you think will happen to them? This is what the scholars are among the people. Many people do not know how to carry out the obligations of the Religion, how to avoid the prohibitions—they don’t know how to worship Allah in all the ways that He is to be worshipped except due to the presence of the scholars among them. So, when the scholars die, the people are left without direction, and in confusion—knowledge departs by their deaths, and ignorance becomes prevalent.”⁷

قال عمر رضى الله عنه موت ألف عابدٍ أهونُ من موت عالمٍ
بصيرٍ بجلال الله وحرامه

‘Umar (رضي الله عنه) said: “The death of a thousand worshippers is easier (upon the *Ummah*) than the death

⁷ *Akhlāq al-‘Ulamā’* of al-Ājurri, p. 96.

of a scholar who has insightful knowledge of that which is *Halāl* and *Harām* with Allah.”⁸

Ibn al-Qayyim commented: “The speech of ‘Umar is understood to mean that this scholar with his knowledge and guidance demolishes everything that Iblīs builds. As for the general worshipper, then his benefit is restricted to only himself.”⁹

For this reason, the scholars of *Sunnah*, *Salafiyyah* and *Hadīth*, the defenders of the Religion and its ‘*Aqeedah* and its *Manhaj* are guardians of the Religion upon earth who stand against falsehood—and are not spoken about except with virtue. Abu Ja‘far at-Tahāwī (d. 321 H رَحِمَهُ اللَّهُ) said:

وَعُلَمَاءُ السَّلَفِ مِنَ السَّابِقِينَ وَمَنْ بَعْدَهُمْ مِنَ التَّابِعِينَ أَهْلُ الْخَيْرِ
وَالْأَثَرِ وَأَهْلُ الْفَقْهِ وَالنَّظَرِ لَا يُذَكَّرُونَ إِلَّا بِالْجَمِيلِ وَمَنْ ذَكَرَهُمْ
بِسُوءٍ فَهُوَ عَلَى غَيْرِ السَّبِيلِ.

“The Scholars of the Salaf from the foremost ones—and those who came after them from the Successors (*at-Tābi‘īn*), the people of virtue, narrations (*ahlul-Athar*), the people understanding and insight are not to be

⁸ Cited by Ibn ‘Abdil-Barr in *Jāmi‘ al-‘Ulūm wal-Hikam*, 1/128.

⁹ *Miftāh Dār as-Sa‘ādah* of Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah, no. 116.

mentioned but with excellence—and whoever speaks about them in an evil way is upon other than the Straight Path.”¹⁰

Ash-Shaikh Al-‘Allāmah, Sālih Al-Fawzān (may Allah preserve him) commented: “The author moves on [from the Sahābah] to mention those who come after them in virtue, and they are the scholars. So, the scholars of this *Ummah* have status and virtue after the Sahābah because they are the inheritors of the Prophets due to the saying of the Messenger, ‘**The scholars are the inheritors of the Prophets**’. And the intent here is the scholars of *ahlul-Sunnah wal-Jamā‘ah*, the people of knowledge, insight and understanding, *ahlul-Athar*, and they are *ahlul-Hadīth*...”

Shaikh Sālih Ālish-Shaikh commented in his explanation of *at-Tahāwiyyah*:

“That is because they are the transmitters of the *Sharī‘ah* and they issue *fatāwā* in matters of *Sharī‘ah*, and they explain to the people the meanings of the Speech of Allah (ﷻ) in His Book, and the meanings of the *ahādīth* of the Prophet (ﷺ). They are the ones who repel the attacks against the Religion—and they do

¹⁰ *Aqeedat at-Tahāwiyyah*, no. 97.

so by establishing the Correct Belief and by establishing the *Sunnah* of the Prophet (ﷺ), and by refuting the fabrications [against it], and the futile narrations which are falsely ascribed to the Prophet (ﷺ).”

The role of the Scholars is crucial in the preservation of the Religion. Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) stated: **“This knowledge will be carried by the trustworthy of every generation. They will expel from it the distortions of those who go to extremes, the lies of the falsifiers, and the interpretations of the ignorant.”**¹¹

‘Allāmah Sadiq Hasan Khān (رحمۃ اللہ علیہ) said, “The saying of the Messenger (ﷺ), ‘They will expel from it the distortions of those who go to extremes’ means the changes made by those who go beyond bounds in the affair of the Religion. ‘Distortions’ refers to exchanging the Truth for falsehood by them changing the words [of the Revealed Texts] or by changing their meanings. ‘The lies

¹¹ Reported by Ibn Qutaybah in ‘Uyūn Al-Akhbār 2/119, al-Bayhaqī in as-Sunan al-Kubrā 10/209, al-Ājurri in ash-Sharī‘ah no. 1-2, at-Tabrizī in Mishkāt al-Masābīh no. 248, Ibn ‘Abdul-Barr in At-Tamhīd 1/59.

of the falsifiers’ means that the scholars will expel the lies of the people of falsehood...”¹²

So, to attack the scholars is to harm those whom Allah has raised to preserve and guard His Religion against the people of falsehood and desires, and to prevent people from the Path of Allah. Ibn al-Mubārak (d. 181 H) said:

مَنْ اسْتَحَفَّ بِالْعُلَمَاءِ ذَهَبَتْ آخِرَتُهُ. وَمَنْ اسْتَحَفَّ بِالْأَمْرَاءِ ذَهَبَتْ دُنْيَاهُ. وَمَنْ اسْتَحَفَّ بِالْإِخْوَانِ ذَهَبَتْ مُرُوءَتُهُ.

“Whoever belittles the scholars has lost his Hereafter; whoever belittles the rulers has lost his world, and whoever belittles his brothers has lost his honour.”¹³

The Sahābah taught the people the importance of knowledge and the excellence of the Scholars.

‘Abdullāh Ibn Mas‘ūd (رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ) said to his companions:

تَدْرُونَ كَيْفَ يَنْقُصُ الْإِسْلَامُ مِنَ النَّاسِ قَالُوا: نَعَمْ كَمَا يَنْقُصُ سَمْنُ الدَّابَّةِ وَكَمَا يَنْقُصُ صِبْغُ الثَّوْبِ وَكَمَا يَفْسُدُ الدِّرْهَمُ لِطُولِ الْحَبِيبِ. فَقَالَ: إِنَّ هَذَا مِنْهُ وَلَكِنْ أَكْثَرُ مِنْ ذَلِكَ ذَهَابُ الْعُلَمَاءِ

¹² Ad-Dīn Al-Khālīs 3/261.

¹³ Siyar A‘lām an-Nubalā’ of adh-Dhahabī, 8/408.

يَكُونُ فِي الْحَيِّ الْعَالِمَانِ فَيَمُوتُ أَحَدُهُمَا فَيَذْهَبُ بِنِصْفِ عِلْمِهِمْ.
وَيَكُونُ فِي الْحَيِّ الْعَالِمِ فَيَمُوتُ فَيَذْهَبُ بِعِلْمِهِمْ. وَبِذَهَابِ الْعُلَمَاءِ
يَذْهَبُ الْعِلْمُ.

“Do you know how Islam will diminish from the people?” They replied: “Yes, just as fat diminishes from the beast of burden, and the colour of dye diminishes from the garment, and the hardness diminishes from a silver coin when it stays in the pocket for a long time.” He (ﷺ) said: “All of that is from it—but greater than that is the passing away of the scholars such that if there are two scholars in a town, and one of them dies, half of the knowledge of that place has passed away. There will be in a place wherein there is only one scholar, so when he dies, all their knowledge passes away. So, with the passing away of the scholars, knowledge is taken away.”¹⁴

قَالَ عَبْدُ اللَّهِ هُوَ ابْنُ مَسْعُودٍ كَيْفَ أَنْتُمْ إِذَا لَبَسْتُمْ فِتْنَةً يَهْرُمُ
فِيهَا الْكَبِيرُ وَيَرْبُو فِيهَا الصَّغِيرُ وَيَتَّخِذُهَا النَّاسُ سُنَّةً. فَإِذَا غَيَّرَتْ
قَالُوا: غَيَّرَتْ السُّنَّةَ. قَالُوا: مَتَى ذَلِكَ يَا أَبَا عَبْدِ الرَّحْمَنِ. قَالَ إِذَا
ذَهَبَتْ عُلَمَاؤُكُمْ وَكَثُرَتْ جُهَلَاؤُكُمْ وَكَثُرَتْ قُرَاؤُكُمْ وَقَلَّتْ

¹⁴ Madkhal ilas-Sunan al-Kubrā of al-Bayhaqī.

فُقَهَاؤُكُمْ وَكَثُرَتْ أُمَرَاؤُكُمْ وَقَلَّتْ أُمَنَّاؤُكُمْ وَتُفِقَهُ لِعَيْرِ الدِّينِ
وَالْتُمِسَتْ الدُّنْيَا بِعَمَلِ الْآخِرَةِ.

Ibn Mas‘ūd (رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ) said in a narration that is ascribed to Allah’s Messenger (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ): “How will you be when you are surrounded by *fitan* (i.e., innovations, desires, corruption and misguidance) wherein the adult reaches old age knowing only that, and the young grows old knowing only that, such that the people will consider *fitnah* to be the Sunnah? And if you forbid it, they will say: **‘You have forbidden the Sunnah!’**”

They said: “When will that be, O Abā ‘Abdur-Rahmān?” He (رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ) replied: “(1) **When your scholars have died,** (2) **and the ignorant among you become numerous,** (3) **your reciters are plentiful,** (4) **your men with understanding (*fuqahā*) are scarce,** (5) **your rulers are many,** (6) **the trustworthy ones are few,** (7) **when knowledge of the Religion is sought for other than the Religion** (8) **and when the worldly possessions are sought through the deeds of the Hereafter.**”¹⁵

¹⁵ *Sahih*, reported by ad-Dārimī, nos. 191-192, al-Lālikā’ī no. 123, Ibn Abī Shaybah no. 19003, *Madkhal ilas-Sunan al-Kubrā* of al-Bayhaqī no. no. 1937, and al-Albānī said in *Qiyām Ramadān* p. 3, ‘It is

The truly steadfast scholars *do not care* if they are betrayed, opposed, or abandoned. They are the followers of the Prophet (ﷺ) and his inheritors—and they know that those who are tried and afflicted the most are the Prophets, then those who most resemble them—and the stronger a believer is in his religion, the more he is tried. So, they remain firm upon the *Sunnah* and upon the *Manhaj* of the *Salaf* regardless of the opposition—and especially when the People of Truth are few because that is when you will see the true believers and the true betrayers (who abandon *ahlul-Haqq*). It is not numbers that we chase, it is the truth with sincerity to Allah.

That is why Fudayl Ibn ‘Iyād (d. 187 H رَحِمَهُ اللَّهُ) said:

وَعَلَيْكَ بِطَرِيقِ الْهُدَى وَلَا يَضُرُّكَ قَلَّةُ السَّالِكِينَ وَإِيَّاكَ وَطَرِيقِ
الضَّلَالِ وَلَا تَغْتَرِ بِكَثْرَةِ الْهَالِكِينَ

“Cling to the path of guidance—it does not harm you that only a few traverse it—and keep away from the paths of misguidance and be deceived not by the many who are destroyed [upon it].”¹⁶

authentic as the statement of Ibn Mas‘ūd and in its ruling, it is elevated to the Prophet ﷺ.

¹⁶ *al-I’tisām* of ash-Shātibi, 1/112.

The true followers of the Salafi Manhaj do not increase the number of the people of misguidance by attending their gatherings—and those who do attend their functions are counted by *ahlus-Sunnah* to be among them in this world—and on the Day of Judgement they will be raised along with them. Abu Dharr (رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ) said:

مَنْ كَثَّرَ سَوَادَ قَوْمٍ فَهُوَ مِنْهُمْ وَمَنْ رَضِيَ عَلَى قَوْمٍ كَانَ شَرِيكَ مَنْ عَمِلَهُ

“Whoever increases the number of a people, then he is from them—and whoever is pleased with a people, then he is a participant in what they do.” And in a narration:

مَنْ كَثَّرَ سَوَادَ قَوْمٍ فَهُوَ مِنْهُمْ وَمَنْ أَحَبَّ قَوْمًا حَشَرَ مَعَهُمْ

“Whoever increases the number of a people, then he is from them—and whoever loves a people, he will be raised with them (on the Day of Judgement).”¹⁷

So, upon us is to bolster the numbers of *ahlus-Sunnah* by sitting in the gatherings of the scholars and the callers to Allah from the students of knowledge, and especially

¹⁷ Reported by ad-Daylami in *Musnad al-Firdaws* 3/519 no. 5621 (see also 2/378 no. 2588), Ibn al-Mubārak in *az-Zuhd war-Raqā'iq* as a saying of Abu Dharr (رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ).

the elders, so that we benefit from those sittings while they are still present.

The closer we come to the Hour, the scarcer the knowledge becomes due to the death of the scholars and the death of the elders in the *Da‘wah* because with their deaths, piety disappears, and the insincere and sinners are followed, and Allah’s aid is sought.

‘Abdullāh Ibn Mas‘ūd (رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ) explained, **“There will not come upon you a day except that it is worse than the day that came before it until the Hour is established. I do not mean in terms of affluence in one’s life or the wealth that one acquires. Rather, there will not come upon you a day except that it will be lesser in knowledge than the day that passed before it. So, when the scholars have passed away and died, the people will all be at the same level—they will not enjoin the good, nor forbid the evil, and then, they will be destroyed.”**¹⁸

Abu Dharr (رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ) narrated from Allah’s Messenger (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ): **“You are today in a time of many scholars and few speakers. So, whoever abandons even a tenth of what he knows is ruined. There will**

¹⁸ Reported by Ad-Dārimī no. 194. Ibn Hajr declared the narration to be good in *Fathul-Bārī* 13/26-27.

come after that a time of many [ignorant] speakers wherein the scholars are few. So, whoever holds fast to even a tenth of what he knows, will be saved.”¹⁹

So, in the time of the Salaf, the scholars of Sunnah were many, and those who attended their gatherings were numerous²⁰—their classes would be filled with students of knowledge and laymen because they knew the value of knowledge. Al-Hāfidh Abu Bakr al-Khatīb al-Baghdādī (d. 463 H رَحِمَهُ اللهُ) reported with his chain of narration to Abul-Fadl az-Zuhrī who said: **“I attended the gathering of Ja‘far Ibn Muhammad al-Firyābī (d. 301 H) and there 10,000 men present.”²¹** And al-Khatīb narrated an addition in *Tārīkh Baghdād* (97/12) that Abul-Fadl said at the end, **“...not one of them remains besides me.”** And he began weeping.

¹⁹ *Sahih*, reported by at-Tirmidhī no. 2267, Ahmad in *al-Musnad* no. 21372, al-Bukhārī in *at-Tārīkh* no. 2819, al-Harawī in *Dhamm al-Kalām* no. 100, and authenticated by Al-Albānī in *as-Sahīhah* no. 2510.

²⁰ Today, the opposite is true: large crowds attend the gatherings of the misguided innovators while those who attend the gatherings of the Salafi scholars are far fewer.

²¹ See *al-Muntaqā min al-Kitāb al-Jāmi‘ li Akhlāq ar-Rāwī wa Ādābis-Sāmi‘*, no. 48.

And this Ja‘far Ibn Muhammad al-Firyābī was a scholar from era of the great *Imāms* of *hadīth*—originally from Firyāb in the region of Balkh, in modern day Afghanistan bordering Turkmenistan. He studied under the great scholars such as Qutaibah Ibn Sa‘īd, Ishāq Ibn Rahūyah, Abu Bakr Ibn Abī Shaybah, ‘Alī Ibn al-Madīnī, and others. He travelled the lands seeking knowledge of *hadīth* and teaching—places such as *Mā Warā’ an-Nahr*²², Khurasān, Iraq, Hijāz, Shām (Levant), Egypt and the Arabian Peninsula. From his students was Abu Bakr al-Ismā‘īlī, Abul-Qāsim at-Tabarānī, Abu Bakr al-Ājurri, and the narrator of this report, Abul-Fadl ‘Ubaydullāh az-Zuhrī who lived for so long that none remained alive from those who had sat in that gathering with Ja‘far al-Firyābī except for him—may Allah’s Mercy envelope all them.

When knowledge of the Religion is known and widespread, people have no excuse but to follow the Sunnah, and to worship Allah—and if they abandon knowledge and action, they are ruined. Al-Khatīb al-Baghādādī also reported (no. 46) that Abu ‘Alī Sālih Ibn

²² Transoxiana: the Land beyond the Oxus River in lower Central Asia; modern-day eastern Uzbekistan, western Tajikistan, southern Kazakhstan and parts of Turkmenistan wherein are found the centres of learning in early Islam such as Bukhārā, Samarqand, etc.

Muhammad al-Baghdādī said: **“Muhammad Ibn Isma‘īl [al-Bukhārī] came to Baghdad and I would write his *hadīth* narrations—and those who came to his sitting were more twenty thousand people.”**

But when there is little or no knowledge in a land, and as the Hour draws close—wherein ignorance is widespread and the callers to misguidance are numerous, vocal and eloquent—then finding the Truth and holding on the Truth is hard, so whoever sincerely holds fast even to even a small amount that he knows to be truth is saved. The Prophet (ﷺ) stated:

فَإِنَّ مِنْ وَرَائِكُمْ أَيَّامًا. الصَّبْرُ فِيهِنَّ مِثْلُ الْقَبْضِ عَلَى الْجُمْرِ.
لِلْعَامِلِ فِيهِنَّ مِثْلُ أَجْرِ خَمْسِينَ رَجُلًا يَعْمَلُونَ مِثْلَ عَمَلِكُمْ. قِيلَ
يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ أَجْرُ خَمْسِينَ رَجُلًا مِنَّا أَوْ مِنْهُمْ. قَالَ: لَا بَلْ أَجْرُ
خَمْسِينَ مِنْكُمْ.

“Ahead of you are days wherein having patience will be like holding onto burning hot coals. The one who performs righteous actions in those times will attain the reward of fifty men who do the deeds that you do.” It was said, “O Messenger of Allah, the reward

equivalent to fifty of our men or from them?” He said, “Rather, fifty from among you.”²³

That is because close to the Hour, there will be days of treachery and deception—we see that today where people in this Ummah openly call to following desires, innovations, sectarianism, heresy, and liberalism²⁴, and those who sow doubts into the hearts of the youth about their Lord through Atheism, Evolution, Darwinism, etc. Imām Ahmad reported in *al-Musnad* (no. 13298) from Anas Ibn Mālik (رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ), ascribed to the Prophet (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) that he said: **“Indeed before the appearance of the Dajjāl there will be years of treachery...”**

So, the death of the righteous scholars is truly a calamity due to the loss that is suffered by the people of the earth. By the death of the scholars, we come closer and closer to the Hour and the trials that precede it. Allah said in His Book regarding the unbelievers:

²³ Abu Dawūd, at-Tirmidhi no. 3058, Ibn Mājah no. 4014, al-Hākim who declared it authentic, adh-Dhahabi agreed and al-Albāni graded it *saheeh* in *as-Saheehah*, no. 494.

²⁴ And this is from the extreme forms of *irjā*—they commit the worst of sins and perversions but still imagine they are pious and committed believers!

فَمَا بَكَتْ عَلَيْهِمُ السَّمَاءُ وَالْأَرْضُ وَمَا كَانُوا مُنْظَرِينَ ﴿٢٩﴾

“And the heavens and the earth wept not for them, nor were they given a respite.” (*ad-Dukhān* 44:29) Mujāhid who was born in the Khilāfah of ‘Umar in 21 H and died in 102 H (رَحِمَهُ اللَّهُ) said:

مَا مَاتَ مُؤْمِنٌ إِلَّا بَكَتْ عَلَيْهِ السَّمَاءُ وَالْأَرْضُ أَرْبَعِينَ
صَبَاحًا. قَالَ: فَقُلْتُ لَهُ: أَتَبْكِي الْأَرْضُ. فَقَالَ: أَتَعْجَبُ. وَمَا
لِلْأَرْضِ لَا تَبْكِي عَلَى عَبْدٍ كَانَ يُعْمِرُهَا بِالرُّكُوعِ وَالسُّجُودِ. وَمَا
لِلسَّمَاءِ لَا تَبْكِي عَلَى عَبْدٍ كَانَ لَتَكْبِيرِهِ وَتَسْبِيحِهِ فِيهَا دَوِيٌّ كَدَوِي
التَّحْلِ.

“There is not a believer that dies except that the sky and the earth weep over his death for forty days.” It was said, “The earth weeps?!” He replied, “Are you surprised? Why should the earth not weep over a servant who spent his life in *Rukū‘* and in *Sujūd*? And why should the sky not weep over a servant who would make the *Takbīr* and the *Tasbīh* in it like the humming echo of bees!?”²⁵

²⁵ *Tafsīr* of Ibn Kathīr of *ad-Dukhān*.

If that is the case for the general believer, then how much more is the weight of loss when a scholar dies.

Sa‘īd Ibn Zayd (رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ) wept upon the death of ‘Umar (رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ), so it was said to him, “Why do you weep?” He said, “It is over Islam that I weep, for by the death of ‘Umar there has been a tearing of Islam that will not be stitched together until the day of Resurrection.”²⁶

Zayd Ibn Wahb (رَحِمَهُ اللَّهُ) said, “‘Abdullāh Ibn Mas‘ūd came to us, and he spoke about ‘Umar until the pebbles on the ground became wet with his tears. He said: ‘Umar was a fortress protecting Islam. A person would enter Islam through it, and he would not leave it. But by his death, the fortress has been breached, so people will leave Islam, and they will not enter it [as before].”²⁷

قال ابن القيم رحمه الله لما كان صلاح الوجود بالعلماء. ولولا هم
كان الناس كالبهائم. بل أسوأ حالاً. كان موت العالم مصيبة لا
يجبرها إلا خلف غيره له.

Ibn al-Qayyim said in *Miftāh Dār as-Sa‘ādah*:

“Rectification is due the presence of the scholars—and were it not for them, people would be like cattle

²⁶ *At-Tabaqāt* of Ibn Sa‘d.

²⁷ *At-Tabaqāt* of Ibn Sa‘d.

[without direction], rather their state would be worse than cattle. The death of a scholar is a calamity that is not repaired except if there is one who replaces him.” So, we must know our scholars, our people of knowledge and the true callers to Allah. That is why we say to people who give da‘wah and invite the youth to listen to them:

سَمُّوا لَنَا رِجَالَكُمْ

“Name to us your men!” i.e., name to us your scholars because we live in times of *fitnah*, wherein people have innovated and split the Religion into sects and groups and ascribe them to Islam. Muhammad Ibn Sīrīn (d. 110 H رَحِمَهُ اللَّهُ) said:

فَلَمَّا وَقَعَتِ الْفِتْنَةُ قَالُوا سَمُّوا لَنَا رِجَالَكُمْ فَيُنْظَرُ إِلَى أَهْلِ السُّنَّةِ
فَيُؤْخَذُ حَدِيثُهُمْ وَيُنْظَرُ إِلَى أَهْلِ الْبِدْعِ فَلَا يُؤْخَذُ حَدِيثُهُمْ

“When the *Fitnah* struck, they (the Salaf) would ask: **‘Name to us your men!’** So, they would look to *ahlul-Sunnah* and their narrations taken—and they would look to *ahlul-Bi‘dah*, and their narrations were left.”²⁸

So, ask them to name their scholars and name their *mashayikh*, and see whether they are known, praised,

²⁸ Muslim, *al-Muqaddimah*, no. 27.

and recommended—and look to see whether they speak with the speech of the early Salaf, and cooperate with the Salafis, or whether they cooperate with the innovators and share platforms with them, and warn against the Salafis. This investigation is important *before* taking knowledge from a person, whether in person or online. Most people follow misguidance without realising, so when we say, ‘name to us your men and name us your scholars’ we are following an age-old tradition. Ibn Mājah reported in his *Sunan* (no. 9):

حَدَّثَنَا يَعْقُوبُ بْنُ حُمَيْدٍ بْنِ كَاسِبٍ حَدَّثَنَا الْقَاسِمُ بْنُ نَافِعٍ حَدَّثَنَا الْحَجَّاجُ بْنُ أَرْطَاةَ عَنْ عَمْرِو بْنِ شُعَيْبٍ عَنْ أَبِيهِ قَالَ قَامَ مُعَاوِيَةُ خَطِيبًا: فَقَالَ أَئِنَّ عُلَمَاءُكُمْ أَئِنَّ عُلَمَاءُكُمْ. سَمِعْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَقُولُ: لَا تَقُومُ السَّاعَةُ إِلَّا وَطَائِفَةٌ مِنْ أُمَّتِي ظَاهِرُونَ عَلَى النَّاسِ لَا يُبَالُونَ مَنْ خَذَلَهُمْ وَلَا مَنْ نَصَرَهُمْ

‘Amr bin Shu‘aib narrated that his father said: Mu‘āwiyah (رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ) stood up to speak and he said, “Where are your scholars? Where are your scholars? For I heard the Messenger of Allah (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) say: **‘The Hour will not be established until a group of my Ummah is manifest**

over the people—they do not care who betrays them or who aids them.”²⁹

In another narration, the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

لَا تَزَالُ طَائِفَةٌ مِنْ أُمَّتِي قَائِمَةٌ بِأَمْرِ اللَّهِ لَا يَضُرُّهُمْ مَنْ خَذَلَهُمْ أَوْ خَالَفَهُمْ حَتَّى يَأْتِيَ أَمْرُ اللَّهِ وَهُمْ ظَاهِرُونَ عَلَى النَّاسِ

“There shall not cease to remain a group from my *Ummah* steadfast upon the command of Allah. They are not harmed by those who abandon them nor by those who oppose them until the command of Allah comes—and they shall be manifest over the people.”³⁰

Muhammad Ibn Ismā‘īl Al-Bukhārī (d. 256 H رَحِمَهُ اللَّهُ) said:

‘Ali Ibn al-Madīnī (رَحِمَهُ اللَّهُ) said: “They are the Companions of Hadīth (*As-hābul-Hadīth*).”

Imām At-Tirmidhī (no. 2167) reported from Ibn ‘Umar (رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمَا) that Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) said: **“Allah will not unite my *Ummah* upon misguidance. And the Hand of Allah is with the *Jamā‘ah*, and whoever deviates from that, he deviates himself to the Fire.”**

²⁹ Graded *sahīh* by al-Albānī in his checking of *Sunan Ibn Mājah*; see *as-Sahīhah*, no. 1165, 1958, 1971.

³⁰ Muslim, no 1037.

Abu ʿĪsā at-Tirmidhī (d. 279 H) said: “The meaning of *al-Jamāʿah* in the view of the scholars is: The people of understanding, knowledge and tradition (*ahlul-fiqh wal-ʿilm wal-hadīth*).”

At-Tirmidhī also said: I heard al-Jārūd Ibn Muʿādh saying: I heard ʿAlī Ibn al-Hasan saying: I asked ʿAbdullāh Ibn al-Mubārak: **“Who are the *Jamāʿah*?”** He said: **“Abu Bakr and ʿUmar.”** It was said to him: **“But Abu Bakr and ʿUmar are dead.”** He said: **“Then it is so-and-so and so-and-so.”** So, it was said: **“But so-and-so and so-and-so are also dead.”** So, he said: **“Then Abu Hamzah As-Sukkarī is the *Jamāʿah*.”** At-Tirmidhī said: **“Abu Hamzah is Muhammad Ibn Maymūm. He was a righteous scholar. Ibn al-Mubārak said this regarding him in his lifetime.”**

So, the *Jamāʿah* about whom the Messenger (ﷺ) said, ‘The Hand of Allah is with the *Jamāʿah*,’ are the scholars and whoever deviates from that *Jamāʿah*, ‘deviates into the Fire.’ So, beware of being drawn into misguidance that seeks to belittle the great Salafi scholars of our time. Learn knowledge and remain steadfast, may Allah grant us and you success.

All praise is due to Allah, the Lord of all creation; may Allah extol the mention of our noble Prophet

“Learn Knowledge Before It Is Taken Away...”

Muhammad in the highest company of Angels and give him peace and security—and his family, his Companions and all those who follow him correctly until the establishment of the Hour.

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