

Verily This Knowledge Is Religion, So Look To The One You Take Your Religion From

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Bismillāh wa-Alḥamdulillāh wa Ṣalātu wa Salaam 'alā Rasūlillāh 'amma ba'd

Muwahhideen Publications hosted a LIVE Tele-Lecture with the Noble Shaykh 'Abd Allāh Ibn Ṣulḥīq az-Zafīrī, Imām of Masjid Mu'āwīyyah Ibn Abī Sufyān in Ḥafar al-Bāṭin, K.S.A on Tuesday 11th August, 2015. The Shaykh is well-known to the major scholars of our time, like Shaykh Rabī' Ibn Hādī al-Madkhalī and Shaykh 'Ubayd al-Jābirī (May Allāh preserve them both), who both wrote introductions and recommendations to his books. Shaykh 'Abdullāh az-Zafīrī is also a professor at The Islāmic University in Ḥafar al-Bāṭin and is very active in da'wah throughout the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and outside of it. He participates in conferences alongside the major scholars, like Shaykh Rabī', Shaykh 'Ubayd and Shaykh Muḥammad Ibn Hādī (May Allāh preserve them all), and these major scholars also attend his masjid to give lessons as well.

The following is notes from the tele-lecture...

Indeed, Allāh created this creation in order to obey Him and He did not neglect them and leave them without guidance. Rather, He sent Messengers and revealed Books out of His Mercy upon them, and to draw their attention to what is important and teach them and establish the proof upon them. Allāh says:





“He it is Who sent among the unlettered ones a Messenger (Muḥammad) from among themselves, reciting to them His Verses, purifying them (from the filth of disbelief and polytheism), and teaching them the Book (this Qur’ān, Islāmīc laws and Islāmīc jurisprudence) and al-Ḥikmah (as-Sunnah: legal ways, orders, acts of worship, etc. of Prophet Muḥammad). And verily, they had been before in manifest error.”¹

“And We never punish until We have sent a Messenger (to give warning).”²

There are many other verses indicating that **Allāh** does not neglect His servants. Out of His Mercy and Infinite Wisdom He sends for them Messengers and made the final Messenger our Prophet *Muḥammad* (صلى الله عليه وسلم). And that was not the end. Rather, after him were scholars who followed in his footsteps, reviving for the people the affair of their *Dīn* and teaching them what they need to know to worship their Lord, commanding them with the good and forbidding them from the evil. The Lord of everything in existence has made this a *Sunnah* in His creation; something He has willed and decreed both in a religious and natural sense, that scholars will always come after the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) and shall continue to do so until the Day of Resurrection, teaching the people the *Dīn* and reviving it so that the religion of the people does not get lost.

Imām Aḥmad (رحمه الله) said in his treatise which was a refutation of the deviant sect the *Jahmiyyah*, after *Bismillāh Ar-Raḥmān Ar-Raḥīm* he said: “*Alḥamdulillah* Who has put in every period of time after the Messengers remnants from the People of Knowledge. They call those who have gone astray to guidance and they are patient upon the harm they receive in that path. They bring back to life through the Book of **Allāh** those who are dead and give sight with the Light of **Allāh** to the blind. How many murder victims of *Iblīs* have they brought back to life

¹ *Sūrah al-Jumu’ah* 62:2

² *Sūrah al-Isrā`* 17:15



and how many astray have they guided. How beautiful is their effect on the people and how vile is the effect of the people upon them. They refute from the Book of **Allāh** that which has been misinterpreted by the extremists and those who seek false interpretations and those ignorant people who falsely explain it away and have raised the flags of innovation and opened the doors for *fitnah*. Those who are differing with the Book and are in indifference to the Book, the only thing they agree upon is departing from the Book of **Allāh**. They speak about **Allāh** without any knowledge of His Book and they speak with doubtful speech and trick the ignorant with those things that are confusing to them. We seek refuge with **Allāh** from the *fitnah* of those who lead others astray.”

The Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said: “*There will continue to be a sect from my followers that are upon the truth until the Hour is established. They will not be harmed by those who differ with them or those who disgrace them. And this shall continue until the Day of Judgement.*”

The scholars have interpreted this sect as being the People of Knowledge; they are the ones who continue to remain upon the truth until the Day of Judgement.

Imām Aḥmad (رحمه الله) said: “If they are not *Ahl al-Ḥadīth*, then I do not know who they are.”

It is the ‘*Ulamā*’ who grant clarity to the people and give them insight into their religion and repel from the *Dīn* of **Allāh** what is not from it. It is obligatory upon each person to know who he should take his religion from. As the great *Tābi’ī* scholar *Muḥammad Ibn Sīrīn* (رحمه الله) said: “Indeed, this knowledge is *Dīn* so look to the one you take your *Dīn* from.”

When a *Muslim* knows that seeking knowledge of the *Dīn* is something that brings him closer to **Allāh**, he should likewise know who he should take his *Dīn* from and who he is not allowed to take his *Dīn* from. The people whom ‘*ilm* is to be taken from are those who have been described in the Book and *Sunnah* and in the statements of the *Salaf* of the *Ummah*.



It is by taking knowledge from the likes of such scholars that the *Muslim* increases in his faith, in his obedience to **Allāh** and in his character. So the *Muslim* should stay away from *Ahl al-Bid'ah* and he should tie himself to and keep the company of the scholars who are following the path of the *Salaf aṣ-Ṣāliḥ*; those whose description has been mentioned in the Book of **Allāh** and in the *Sunnah* of His Messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم). As **Allāh** (سبحانه وتعالى) says:

“It is only those who have knowledge among His slaves that fear Allāh.”³

Ahl al-‘Ilm are the people who fear **Allāh**; they are the people of truth. They are the people of following the *Sunnah*, not of innovating and bringing what is not from it. Knowledge is to be taken from them because they are the ones who fear **Allāh** and have truly upheld sincere *Tawḥīd* to **Allāh**. They do not teach the people what **Allāh** is not pleased with; they only teach what the Messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم) and his Companions and those who followed in their footsteps taught. As the Messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم) himself said: “Follow my *Sunnah* and the *Sunnah* of my Righty Guided *Khulafā`* after me. Hold on to it with your molar teeth.”

Allāh says, speaking about the virtue of the People of Knowledge:

“Say: ‘Are those who know equal to those who know not?’”⁴

The people who know the *Sunnah* are not equal to the people of *bid'ah* and desires. *Ahl as-Sunnah* are the people of *taqwā*; the people of following the *Dīn* of **Allāh**, and they are not equal to those innovate in the religion what is not from it. *Ahl al-‘Ilm* are the people of truth, the people of sincerity, the people of following the *Sunnah*. It is through them that **Allāh** brings about the fruits of guidance and *taqwā*. They are not like the people of desires who waver in their religion, and this can be witnessed when we look at those who follow the scholars and those who follow other than them.

³ *Sūrah Fāṭir* 35:28

⁴ *Sūrah az-Zumar* 39:9





Those who are students and companions of *Ahl al-'Ilm*, **Allāh** brings about good through them. And those on the other hand who take knowledge from the people of desires, they are quick to change in their religion and *'Aqīdah*. One of the *Salaf* mentioned: "If you see a youth following *Ahl as-Sunnah* have hope for him and if you see him following other than *Ahl as-Sunnah* despair of him."

Allāh commands us to ask the People of Knowledge:

*"So ask the People of Knowledge if you do not know."*⁵

I.e. those who know the proper *'Aqīdah* and the *Sunnah* of the Messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم). **Allāh** has spoken highly of these scholars when He said:

*"Allāh bears witness that Lā ilāha illa Huwa (none has the right to be worshipped but He), and the angels, and those having knowledge (also give this witness)."*⁶

This is evidence of the high status of *Ahl al-'Ilm*, that **Allāh** has tied His own testimony and the testimony of His angels to the testimony of the scholars. It is through *Ahl al-'Ilm* that **Allāh** preserves this religion in every day and age. It is for this reason **Allāh** commands His servants to return to them and ask them about their affairs. It is only the People of Knowledge - those who are firmly grounded in it - whom **Allāh** commands us to turn to and ask and learn from. **Allāh** does not tell us to return to and study with the story tellers and those who admonish others. **Allāh** says:

"When there comes to them some matter touching (public) safety or fear, they make it known (among the people), if only they had referred it to the Messenger or to those charged with authority among them, the

⁵ *Sūrah an-Naḥl* 16:43

⁶ *Sūrah Āli 'Imrān* 3:18



proper investigators would have understood it from them (directly). Had it not been for the Grace and Mercy of Allāh upon you, you would have followed Shayṭān, save a few of you.”⁷

When it comes to the things that are problematic in society regarding affairs of security and fear, it is the people who are able to draw conclusions, the people of *fiqh* who can guide society and show them the correct path to take. Whoever fails to return their affairs to the scholars has become the prey of *Shayṭān*; he has become an animal to be hunted by the *Shayṭān*. *Ahl as-Sunnah* on the other hand - those who return to the scholars and seek guidance from *Ahl al-‘Im* in their affairs - are those who the *Shayṭān* runs away from.

Allāh has raised the rank of the People of Knowledge of His *Dīn*. He says:

“Allāh will exalt in degree those of you who believe, and those who have been granted knowledge. And Allāh is Well-Acquainted with what you do.”⁸

Likewise, **Allāh** commands His servants to request an increase in knowledge:

“...and say: ‘My Lord! Increase me in knowledge.’”⁹

Never did **Allāh** command His servants to ask for increase in material things or anything else. The only thing He ever commanded us to seek an increase in is *‘ilm*.

Ibn Ḥajar (رحمه الله) in his commentary of *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* in the chapter of “The Virtue of Knowledge” mentioned about this statement of **Allāh**: “This is clear and indicates the virtue of knowledge as seeking an increase in it has been commanded whereas we are not commanded to seek an increase of anything else in the religion. The request for this increase is about knowledge, which is knowledge of **Allāh** and His Attributes.”

⁷ *Sūrah an-Nisā`* 4:83

⁸ *Sūrah al-Mujādilah* 58:11

⁹ *Sūrah Ṭa-Ha* 20:114



Imām al-Bukhārī (رحمه الله) said: “Chapter: Whoever **Allāh** wants good for, He grants them a deep understanding of the religion. On the authority of *Mu’āwiyah* who said: ‘I heard the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) saying: ‘Whoever **Allāh** wants good for, He grants him a deep understanding of the religion.’”

Allāh has made *Ahl al-‘ilm* witnesses upon this *Ummah* on the Day of Judgement. They shall be witnesses over this nation on the Day of Judgement and they shall testify for *Nūḥ* (عليه السلام) that he indeed conveyed the message of **Allāh** to his people; that indeed, he clarified to the people the *Dīn* of **Allāh**.

In *Saḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* in the chapter: “Thus We have made you a balanced nation, that you be witnesses over mankind and the Messenger (*Muḥammad*) be a witness over you.”¹⁰

He said (رحمه الله): This is an indication from the well-known *ḥadīth* of the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) regarding the 73 sects that the Jews split into 71 sects, the Christians into 72 and the Muslim nation shall be divided into 73 sects, all in the Hellfire except one. The Companions asked: “Who is that one sect that will be saved from the Hellfire?” And the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said: “*Al-Jamā’ah*”

Al-Bukhārī (رحمه الله) explained who is meant by “*Al-Jamā’ah*”. He said: “Those who are meant are the scholars, the People of Knowledge.”

Thus, we should tie ourselves to them and take our knowledge solely from them.

Abū Sa’īd al-Khudrī (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said: “*Nūḥ* will come on the Day of Judgement and he will be asked, ‘Did you convey the Message to your people?’ His people will say, ‘No warner came to us; we did not hear any message.’ It will be said to *Nūḥ*, ‘Do you have

¹⁰ *Sūrah al-Baqarah* 2:143



any witnesses to testify that you did fulfil your duty of conveying the message?’ He will say, ‘Yes, Muḥammad and his nation.’”

And this is what is meant by Allāh’s statement: **“Thus We have made you a balanced nation, that you be witnesses over mankind and the Messenger (Muḥammad) be a witness over you.”**

This is the virtue of *Ahl al-‘Ilm*. They will testify in favour of Nūḥ (عليه السلام) on the Day of Judgement. Part of this virtue shows the obligation of following *Ahl al-‘Ilm*. It is the person who has a deep understanding of this religion who holds tight to the *Sunnah* and leaves alone *Ahl al-Bid’ah*.

There is a stern warning from our Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) against leaving alone the scholars and instead taking the ignorant or innovators as leaders. Following those who are not scholars is doing just this - taking the ignorant as leaders.

Imām al-Bukhārī mentions in *Kitāb al-‘Ilm*: ‘How Knowledge Shall Be Removed’ the *ḥadīth* of ‘Abd Allāh Ibn ‘Amr Ibn al-‘Ās (رضي الله عنه) that the Messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said: **“Indeed Allāh does not remove this knowledge by removing it from the chests of men. Rather, He removes it by removing the scholars i.e. allowing them to die. When this happens the people will take ignorant men as their leaders; they will be asked and they will answer without knowledge. They will misguide themselves and misguide others.”**

Whenever the people leave the scholars and instead turn to the people of desires, this is when they go astray. We see this in our day and age, those who turn their backs on the scholars of the *Sunnah* such as *Shaykh ‘Abd Al-Azīz Ibn Bāz*, *Shaykh Muḥammad Nāṣir ad-Dīn al-Albānī*, *Shaykh Muḥammad Ibn Ṣāliḥ al-‘Uthaymīn*, *Shaykh Ṣāliḥ al-Fawzān*, *Shaykh Rabī Ibn Hādī al-Madkhalī*, *Shaykh Aḥmad an-Najmī*, *Shaykh Zayd al-Madkhalī*. Those who have left alone these scholars of our day and time and instead turned to the people of desires, the likes of *Salmān al-‘Awdah*, *Safar al-*



Hawālī, Muḥammad al-‘Arīfī, ‘Ā’id al-Qarnī - those who have deviated from the *Sunnah* and have taken on the *manhaj* of *al-Ikhwān al-Muslimīn* or *Jamā’ah at-Tablīgh* or *as-Sūrūriyyah* or other than them. They have done nothing but lead the servants of **Allāh** astray and divide the *Ummah* and cause separation. They have done nothing but tie the youth to methodologies that are corrupt and in turn corrupted their *Dīn*. They have caused those youth to love *Ahl al-Bid’ah* and hate *Ahl al-‘Ilm*.

Ibn Mas’ūd (رضي الله عنه) stated: “How shall you be when *fitnah* overcomes you?” He was asked: “When shall this happen?” He responded: “It will happen if you have a lot of *Qurrā`* (reciters) but few *Fuqahā`*; and when the *dunyā* is sought through the affairs of the *Ākhirah*.”

Az-Zuhrī (رحمه الله) said: “Being protected lies in holding on to the *Sunnah* - this is salvation.”

Ibn Mas’ūd (رضي الله عنه) said: “Never shall a day come to you except that the day that comes after is worst than the first day, and this will continue until the Day of Judgement. I do not mean in livelihood and money; rather, when it comes to affairs of the *Dīn*. They people will be less in their knowledge and the scholars will be few and far between and there will not be as many people commanding the good and forbidding the evil; and because of this the people will be destroyed.”

These statements and others of the *Salaf* show us that the *Muslim* is commanded to know who he should take his knowledge from. He should know who the People of Knowledge are and who he is allowed to study with and take his knowledge from. It is not befitting for you to take chances and gamble with your *‘Aqīdah* and *Dīn* and sit with the people of desires and just everyone (unrestrictedly). You should be selective regarding who you study with and accept knowledge from when it comes to their *‘Aqīdah* and practice of the *Dīn*.





If you find a scholar upon the *manhaj* of the *Salaf*, stick to him. If you find a Student of Knowledge and he has sat with the scholars and is following the *manhaj* of the *Salaf* and is not one of the story tellers and people who cause *fitnah*, then likewise stick to him.

This is what we meant by the title of this lecture, which is the *athar* of *Muḥammad Ibn Sīrīn*: “Indeed, this knowledge is *Dīn* so look to the one you take your *Dīn* from.”

Wa Billāhi Tawfīq

Wa SallAllāhu wa Sallama wa Bāarak ‘alā Nabiyyinā Muḥammad wa ‘alā Ālihi wa Ṣaḥbihi wa Sallam

