

The background of the cover is an abstract, textured composition of swirling colors in shades of purple, blue, green, and red. A prominent dark, almost black, horizontal band runs across the middle of the image, serving as a backdrop for the title and subtitle. The overall effect is one of depth and movement, reminiscent of a nebula or a complex, layered structure.

The Manners of the Scholar & Student of Knowledge

from the explanation of
THE HADEETH OF JIBREEL

SHAYKH SALEEM AL-HILALEE

Preface

Indeed all praise is for Allah. We praise Him and we seek His aid and we ask for His forgiveness. We seek Allah's refuge from the evils of ourselves and from our evil deeds. Whomsoever Allah guides no-one can misguide him and whomsoever Allaah misguides then there is none to guide him. I bear witness that none has the right to be worshipped except Allaah, alone, having no partner and I bear witness that Muhammad is His slave and His Messenger. To proceed:

Allaah has protected the homeland of Islaam with the mujaahideen (those who fight jihaad) and He has protected the prescribed way of eemaan with the teachers. Since He, the Most High, says in His clear Book:

It is not right for the Believers that all of them should go off to battle. Rather from every troop of them some of them should remain in order that they should attain knowledge in the Religion. That they should warn their people when they return to them so that they can beware of evil. [Soorah at-Tawbah (9):122].

So Allaah, the Perfect, placed the Believers into two groups. On one of them He has made it obligatory that they fight jihaad in His way. And upon the other one, He has made it obligatory that they attain knowledge of His Religion, in order that not all of them go off to fight jihaad. Because if they all went off to fight jihaad, then the prescribed laws would pass away and knowledge would pass away. Then it would not be possible for them to seek knowledge after that and so the unbelievers would therefore gain dominance over the Religion. Thus, Allaah has raised up high the levels of the two groups of people.¹ And the great scholar Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah (may Allaah have mercy on him) said in his book, 'Miftaah Daaris-Sa'aadah, [vol.1, pp.50~51]. "And Allaah, the Perfect, has informed in His Book about the raising high of the levels four times. The first of them is His saying:

O you who believe, when it is said to you to make space in the gatherings, then make space such that Allaah may grant you spacious dwellings in Paradise and if it is said to you, 'Arise,' then rise up. Allaah will raise up those of you who have Eemaan and those of you who have knowledge in ranks. And Allaah is fully aware of whatever you do. [Soorah al-Mujaadilah (58):11].

The second aayah is His saying:

The Believers are only those who, when Allaah is mentioned, their hearts tremble with fear. And when His signs are recited to them, it increases them in Eemaan and they depend upon their Lord. They are those who establish the prayer and spend out of that which Allaah has provided for them. They are the true Believers, they have ranks with their Lord and they have forgiveness and generous provision in Paradise from their Lord. [Soorah al-Anfaal (6):2~4].

And the third aayah is the saying of Allaah, the Most High:

And whomever comes to Allaah as a true Believer, having done righteous and correct deeds, then for them there are the high ranks. [Soorah Taa Haa (20):75].

¹ Taken from the introduction of 'Al-Faqeeh wal-Mutafaqqih,' the book of al-Khateeb al-Baghdaadee, and has been adapted slightly.

And the fourth aayah is the saying of Allaah, the Most High:

Indeed Allaah has preferred the ones who fight jihaad over those who sit, with a very great reward: degrees of higher grades from Him and forgiveness and mercy. [Soorah an-Nisaa (4):95~96].

So these are four places. In three of them, the raising up of the ranks is for the people of Eemaan, that is those who have the beneficial knowledge (al-'ilm un-naafi') and righteous and correct action (al-'amalus-Saalih). And the fourth aayah mentions the raising up of ranks due to jihaad. So all of the aayahs about the raising up of ranks refer back to knowledge and jihaad, which are the two supports of this Religion."

And from this we see that the scholars, (who have the correct knowledge and wisdom, and teach people the knowledge in such a manner that they teach them the easy things first and then the harder things) those by whom the proof is established, and by whose sayings doubts are removed in the sittings of knowledge and whose sittings are fields where the souls are purified, and in the fields of calling to Allaah-(we see) that they are like those fighting jihaad in the way of Allaah, those who rebut the enemy and those who cut off the desires of the Unbelievers, who go to the battlefronts defending the frontiers.

And this understanding is reported from a group of the first Salaf, Abud-Dardaa (radiyallaahu 'anhu) said, "Whoever holds that going off in the morning or going off later in the day to gain some knowledge is not jihaad, then he is deficient in his intellect and deficient in his opinion."

And Ka'b al-Ahbaar said, "The student of knowledge is like the one who goes off in the morning, or later in the day to fight in the way of Allaah, the Mighty and the Majestic."

And Sufyaan ibn Uyainah al-Hilaalee said, "Whoever seeks knowledge then he has pledged allegiance to Allaah."²

"Indeed some of them, may Allaah have mercy upon them, have clearly stated, amongst them Maalik, ash-Shaafi'ee and Imaam Ahmad, and it is stated word for word by Aboo Haneefah - that, "... the most excellent of actions, after the obligatory duties, is seeking knowledge." This saying is witnessed to by the saying of the Messenger of Allaah (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam), **"The excellence of knowledge is greater than optional actions and the best of your religion is piety."** [Sahih at-Targheeb wat-Targheeb, no.65].³

And Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah (may Allaah have mercy on him) said in 'Miftaah Daaris-Sa'aadah, commenting upon this hadeeth, "This speech is the decisive saying in this matter because if it is the case that some knowledge and an action are both obligatory, then they must both be done, such as fasting and prayer. In that case the excellence of knowledge, optional knowledge is better than the excellence of extra and optional worship. This is because the benefit of knowledge is general, it benefits its possessor and it benefits the rest of the people as well. Whereas the benefit of worship is particular to the person who does that worship. Also because with the scholar, his benefit and knowledge remains after his death. Whereas worship is cut off from him at his death."

And just as it is the case that the one fighting jihaad cannot repel an enemy except with a weapon and with his being prepared, then whoever wishes to go out to fight, has to make preparation for that. Just as Allaah, the Most High said:

If they had truly wanted to go out to fight, they would have made preparation for it. [Soorah at-Tawbah (9):46].

² Refer to 'Madaarijas-Salikeen,' vol.2, p.470.

³ Is is rather "Sahih at-Targheeb wat-Tarheeb, no.65".

And therefore He has commanded that those fighting jihaad prepare and make ready, so He said:

And prepare and make ready for them whatever strength you are able to.

[Soorah al-Anfaal (8):60].

So likewise, the scholar, the teacher and the student will not be able to achieve anything nor remove any distress, nor will he be able to remove any darkness except by his having fine character and correct manners. So it is befitting that the scholar and the teacher should stand out and likewise the student who is learning. He should be distinguished and stand out from the ways of the common people by the fact that he applies the narrations of the Messenger of Allaah (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) as far as he is able. By applying the matters of the Sunnah upon himself because Allaah, the Exalted and Most High, said:

Indeed there is in Allaah's Messenger an excellent and fine example for you. [Soorah al-Ahzaah (33):21].

And all praise is for Allaah, who has caused Sufyaan ath-Thawree to say a very fine word. He said, "If you are able that you should not even scratch your head except according to a narration, then do so." ⁴ "And how truthfully the person who spoke has said, 'Whoever is not trained and watered by the Messenger and given fine milk to drink by him, then he is a lost child deprived of his lineage and he will not get beyond the behaviour of his own people.'" In this there is an explanation of what has preceded, that the authentic, prophetic Sunnah, in all its entirety contains all the manners required by the teacher and by the student.

They are contained and they are gathered in the authentic Sunnah. Indeed even further, I have found all of that stored or held within **the long hadeeth of Jibreel concerning Islaam, Eemaan and Ihsaan.**" These manners are contained within the words of this one hadeeth, because in its words there are the methodologies of teaching and there are pearls in that regard. In its shade are the ways to be followed, when learning and there are precious lessons in that.

So I saw that they should be extracted and affirmed in order that they should be brought out as a golden chain leading to lofty and pure manners. As a reminder of the lofty and pleasing habits that should be adopted, in order that the ummah of Islaam should come back to being, the best of the creation.

I have called it '**The Adornment of the Scholar and the Teacher and Sufficiency for the Student who learns from the hadeeth of Jibreel** (alaihis-salaam).'

And I hope from Allaah that He causes it to produce fruits and He causes it to reach those who deserve it. Those who when they find some good, make supplication for good and blessing for the author of a book and for the publisher of a book. And if they find any shortcomings in it, they rectify and they advise. But as for those people who lie in wait then whenever they see a slip, cry out and shout aloud, just like hyenas. And we ask Allaah for a good end, and it is for Allaah to direct us upon the way.

Written by the one praising his Lord for the completion of His Favour and sending blessings and peace upon Allaah's Messenger for the ease of his Sunnah and the clarity of his way:

Aboo Usaama Saleem ibn Eed al-Hilaalee, as-Salafee, al-Atharee in 'aqeedah, in manhaj, in methodology and in the details of the way.

The forenoon of the day of Jum'ah, in the middle of Jumaadal-Oolaa, of the year 1414 after the hijrah of our Messenger, our example Muhammad ibn Abdullah (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) in 'Ammaan, al-Balqaa, the capital of Jordan.

⁴ Reported in Al-Jaami' li-Akhlaaq ar-Raawee wa Aadaahis Saami', volume 1, page 142.

Chapter One

THE LONG HADEETH OF JIBREEL

The Text of the Hadeeth

From 'Umar ibn al-Khattaab (radiyallaahu 'anhu) who said, "Whilst we were sitting with Allaah's Messenger (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) one day when a man came to us whose clothes were extremely white and whose hair was extremely black; no trace of his having travelled could be seen upon him and none of us knew him. So he sat down with the Prophet (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam), and he put his two knees with his (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) two knees, and he put his two hands on his two (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) thighs. He said, 'O Muhammad! Inform me about al-Islam.' So Allaah's Messenger (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) said, 'Islam is that you testify that none has the right to be worshipped except Allaah and that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allaah, that you establish the Prayer, that you give the Zakat and that you fast Ramadan and that you make Hajj to the House if you are able to get there.' He said, 'You have spoken the truth.' So we were surprised with him, asking him and (then) telling him that he had spoken the truth. 'Then inform me about Eemaan.' He said, 'Eemaan is that you truly believe in Allaah and His Angels and His Books and His Messengers and the Last Day and that you truly believe in the Pre-decree (Qadr), the good of it and the evil of it.' He said, 'You have spoken the truth. Then tell me about Ihsaan.' He said, 'It is that you worship Allaah as if you are seeing Him and even though you do not see him, yet He certainly sees you.' He said, 'You have spoken the truth.' He said, 'Then tell me about the Last Hour.' He said, 'The one who is questioned about it does not know any better than the one who is asking.' He said, 'Then inform me about its signs.' He said, 'That the slave girl will give birth to her mistress and that you will see the bare-footed, naked and destitute shepherds of sheep competing to build high buildings.' Then he went off, so he (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) remained for some time and then he said to me, 'O 'Umar! Do you know who the questioner was?' I said, 'Allaah and His Messenger know best.' He said, 'This was Jibreel-he came to you to teach you your Religion.'

Authenticity of the Hadeeth

This hadeeth is from the singular narrations of Muslim, which are not reported by al-Bukhaaree. So Muslim reports it in his Saheeh, number 8, by way of Ibn 'Umar who said, "My father, 'Umar, narrated this to me ..." It is reported by Ibn 'Umar from the Prophet (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) as occurs in Majma'az-Zawa'id (1 /40), at-Tirmidhee said in his Sunan (8/5), "And what is correct is Ibn 'Umar from his father, 'Umar from the Prophet (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam)." It is also reported by the two Shaykhs, al-Bukhaaree in Al-Fath, 1/114, and Muslim, number 9, from the hadeeth of Aboo Hurairah (radiyallaahu 'anhu). An-Nasaa'ee reports it (8/101) from the hadeeth of Aboo Hurairah and Aboo Dharr (radiyallaahu 'anhu). I say: His chain of narration is authentic (saheeh).

And the hadeeth of 'Umar from the Prophet (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) is also related from a group of the Companions (radiyallaahu 'anhum): from Ibn 'Abbaas, Anas ibn Maalik, Jareer ibn 'Abdullaah and Aboo

'Aamir or Aboo Maalik al-Ashja'ee. I say: However their chains of narration are not free from criticism. They are, however, suitable for consideration.

Importance of this hadeeth

Ibn Rajab al-Hanbalee (may Allaah have mercy on him) said in his book 'Jaami'ul'Uloom wal-Hikam'⁵ concerning this hadeeth, "And it is a hadeeth that is very great in importance and comprises an explanation of the whole of the Religion. Therefore the Prophet (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) said at the end of it, '**...this was Jibreel, he came to you to teach you your Religion ...**' saying this after he had explained the level of Islaam and Eemaan and Ihsaan, so he declared all of that to be the Religion, the Deen."⁶

And he said,⁷ "So whoever considers what we have indicated regarding what this very great hadeeth indicates will find that all matters of knowledge and all matters concerning awareness of the heart-all come back to this hadeeth and they enter under it. Also that the knowledge of all of the scholars in the groups of this ummah, which they speak about does not fall outside this hadeeth and what this hadeeth shows in general or in particular.

Because the scholars of fiqh speak about matters of worship that are from the affairs of Islaam, and they add onto that some matters from the rulings on matters of wealth, matters of marriage and matters pertaining to blood and all of that is from the knowledge of Islaam, as has already been indicated.

But there remains much from the knowledge of Islaam, from its manners and from its characteristics and so on which they do not speak about except for a few of them. And they do speak about the meaning of the two shahaadahs, when they are the foundation of all of Islaam. And those who speak about the fundamentals of the religion, speak about the two shahaadahs and about Eemaan in Allaah, His Angels, His Books, His messengers and the Last Day and Eemaan in the Predecree (Qadr). All of that being mentioned in this hadeeth.

And those who speak about matters of awareness of the heart and matters of relations with the people speak about the level of ihsaan, and they speak about matters that are inward, which enter into what is eemaan also, such as fear, love and dependence and being pleased, having patience and so on. All of that enters into eemaan. So all branches of knowledge of the sharee'ah which the people in the different groups of Muslims speak about, enter into this hadeeth and all of them refer back to it. So in this hadeeth alone there is sufficiency and all praise is for Allaah and all blessings are from Him."

I say: And therefore this hadeeth is counted from those ahaadeeth which the whole of Islaam rests upon and are the pillar and the support of Islaam. And in this treatise which you see in front of you there is sufficient proof of what has been said in this regard.

⁵ Page 54 of its abridgement.

⁶ The origin of this saying is taken from Ibn Taymiyyah in Al'Uboodiyah, pages 24~25. And the earlier scholars if they adapted someone's words, either by addition, deletion or abridgement did not see it to be necessary to then quote the original source. But in this age we suffer from young upshoots who have little knowledge, and cause trouble to the people of knowledge, thinking themselves to be upon something, when this is not the case. So they make great accusations in this regard against the wise scholars of this ummah and those upon their way - this only shows their own foolishness. So for a time I applied the methodology of the earlier scholars in this regard. And some of those who turn into raisins before having ripened into grapes, those who do not have the patience to study long works and to compare sayings may think our saying that this was a methodology followed by the earlier scholars is an exaggeration. But I have gathered more than a thousand clear examples of this matter - from most of the earlier and later scholars, and have come across witnesses to that given by the verifiers from the people of knowledge. But then it seemed better to me not to act upon that in these times when the people are satisfied with the smell of knowledge alone and not its taste. So this is a case of 'speak to the people according to the level of their understanding,' and Allaah, the Most High, knows best. The matter requires further clarification that you will see, if Allaah wills, in some of our articles published in our publication Al-Asaalah. And our shaykh, the great scholar, the muhaddith and scholar of fiqh, Aboo 'Abdur-Rahmaan al-Albaanee (may Allaah have mercy on him) has the merit of having explained and clarified this, so may Allaah reward him with good.

⁷ Page 73 of the abridgement.

And here it is ...

Chapter Two

THE GARDENS OF PARADISE

In the saying of 'Umar ibn al-Khattab (radiyallaahu 'anhu), "Whilst we were sitting ..." is a proof of the importance of the **gatherings of knowledge**.

Their Importance

It is fitting that the people of knowledge set up gatherings for teaching the people because this is the highest level of rabbaaniyeen [the scholars who are wise and teach the people in a wise manner]. As the Lord of all creation said:

It is not (possible) for any human being to whom Allaah has given the Book and al-Hukma (the knowledge and understanding of the laws of religion etc.,) and Prophethood to say to the people, 'Be my worshippers rather than Allaah's.' On the contrary (he would say), 'Be Rabbaaniyoon (learned men of religion who practice what they know and also teach and call others).' Because you are teaching the Book, and you are studying it. [Soorah Aali-'Imraan (3):79].

And this was something informed by the truthful and trustworthy Prophet (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) when he said, "Whoever relieves from a believer some distress from the distresses of this world, Allaah will relieve from him some of the distress from the distress of the Day of Resurrection. And whoever makes it easy for a person in hardship then Allaah will make it easy for him in this world and the Hereafter. And whoever covers up something for a Muslim then Allaah will cover up his faults in this world and the Hereafter. And Allaah aids a servant as long as the servant is aiding his brother. And whoever **proceeds upon a path by which he seeks knowledge then Allaah will make easy for him a path to Paradise. And no people gather in one of the houses of the houses of Allaah reciting the Book of Allaah and studying it amongst themselves except that tranquility descends upon them, and mercy covers them, and the Angels surround them, and Allaah mentions them to those in His presence. And whoever is such that his actions keep him back⁸ then his lineage will not hasten him forward.**"⁹

Along with the fact that this practice contains the beauty of the Religion, and it also involves following the way laid down by the Salafus-Saalih, from the first and foremost. Because a group of the scholars who acted upon knowledge used to establish circles for hadeeth and circles for fiqh. Such as Imaam Maalik ibn Anas, Shu'bah ibn al-Hajjaaj, Yazeed ibn Haaron, Muhammad ibn Ismaa'eel al-Bukhaaree, Ahmad ibn Hanbal and others (may Allaah have mercy on them all).

⁸ i.e., he falls short, or his actions are deficient.

⁹ Reported by Muslim (no.2699) from the hadeeth of Aboo Hurairah (radiyallaahu 'anhu)

Specifying the Gathering of Knowledge

It is befitting that the scholar who teaches should specify for the students the day for the gathering, so that they do not have to break away from and disrupt their work in order to come to it. And some of them should remind others of it.

Selecting an Appropriate time and not tiring the People

The gathering for knowledge should not be every day, because that will cause the students to become weary. The proof in this regard is what is established from 'Abdullaah ibn Mas'ood (radiyallaahu 'anhu). So it is reported from Aboo Waa'il, who said, "Abdullaah used to give admonition to the people on every Thursday. So a man said to him, 'O Aboo 'Abdur-Rahmaan, I would love that you gave an admonition to us every day.' So he replied, 'What prevents me from doing that is that I hate that. I should bore you. Rather I give it to you at certain times just as the Prophet (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) used to give it to us at certain times-for fear that he would make us fed up with it.'"¹⁰

And if a person wants to do very much, then it should be three times each week. From Ikrimah, from Ibn 'Abbaas (may Allaah have be pleased with them both) who said, "**Narrate to the people once every week, and if you refuse then twice and if you do it a lot then three times.** And do not make the people fed up with this Qur'aan and do not come to a people when they are speaking with some of their talk such that you start to relate to them and cut off their talk and therefore bore them, but remain silent. So when they ask you then narrate to them, such that they are eager, and avoid rhymed prose when making supplication. Because I experienced that Allaah's Messenger (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) and his Companions didn't do this, rather they only avoided it."¹¹

And al-Bayhaqee in his book, Al-Madkhal ilas-Sunanil-Kubraa (pp.357~361), brings a chapter heading in this regard: 'Chapter - Suitable Times for Admonition and Knowledge - for fear of boring the people ...' in it he reports a number of narrations from the Salafus-Saalih.

Al-Khateeb al-Baghdaadee in his book, Al-Jaami' li Akhlaaqir-Raawee wa Aadaabis-Saami (2/127), brings a chapter heading: 'The Hatred of Boring the Listener and of Tiring him out by quoting hadeeth for a long time and quoting very much ...' He says in that chapter, "It is befitting that the narrator of hadeeth should not make the gathering in which he is narrating very long. Rather he should make it moderate in length and of middle length to avoid making the one who is listening fed up and weary; such as will lead him to become weary and lazy about learning."

Then he reports from al-Mubarrid, that he said, "Whoever makes the speech long and speaks a great deal, then he has exposed his companions to the risk of boredom and not listening properly. That he leaves a remainder of his hadeeth to return to another time is better for him than adding something which is essential for the student to hear, at a time when he has no desire and no energy to do so. It is reported from 'Abdullaah ibn al-Mu'tazz that he said, 'From the narrators of hadeeth there are some who make it such that the people can hear and listen well and who avoid causing boredom. And they do so by making it somewhat short and they make it longer if they see that the people's eyes want extra. He is a person who knows how to join sayings and cut things off at the right place. He knows what to quote and what to indicate. This is something which adorns his manners just as his manners adorn him.' As is well known naturally a person who is listening becomes bored more quickly than the person speaking and the hearts become tired just as the bodies become tired.

Therefore it is recommended to make use of various points of wisdom to make it easy for the hearts of the people. As is reported from the famous taabi'ee, az-Zuhree, 'A man used to sit with the Companions of Allaah's Messenger (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) and he would revise narrations with them. But when the hadeeth became too much for him and difficult for him, he would say, 'The ear

¹⁰ Reported by al-Bukhaaree, Eng.Trans.Vol. 1, p.60 and Muslim, no.2821.

¹¹ Reported by Al-Bukhaaree, Eng. Trans. Vol.8, p.234, no.349.

becomes tired even though the heart desires it. So give me some of your poetry and give me some of your worldly talk."¹² Therefore when az-Zuhree was asked about the hadeeth he would say, 'Cause yourselves to desire it by using worldly talk.'¹³ Muhammad ibn 'Abdul-Wahhab,¹⁴ said, 'This is because the word az-Zuhree used (i.e., amhidoona) means when camels go outside and eat the nice juicy green plants and then they become sick of it, they eat that which is bitter and thorny and keep eating it until they become fed up and bored with that-then they desire the fresh one again, and so go back to the fresh one. Therefore it is said, 'amhidoonaa' means 'mix up your hadeeth with something that it not hadeeth' so that the soul becomes ready and eager.'"

Eagerness of the Salaf upon the gatherings of knowledge

And it is fitting upon the student who is learning that he should keenly attend the gatherings of knowledge and that he should eat from its gardens, just as was encouraged by the Imaam of the pious ones, the Prophet (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam). He (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) said, "**When one of you passes by the gardens of Paradise then take from them**" The Companions said, "And what are the gardens of Paradise, O Messenger of Allaah?" So he said, "**The circles of Remembrance. Because Allaah, the Most High, has Angels who travel around seeking out the gatherings of Remembrance, so when they come upon them they surround them.**"¹⁵ So when the scholar and the teacher have laid down a day for the students, it is not fitting that anyone should keep away from that appointment unless he is prevented from it with something sufficient as an excuse.

The Salaf, those who came before us in knowledge and eemaan were extremely eager and keen for knowledge and the gatherings of knowledge, because the scholar of this ummah and the great explainer of the Qur'aan, Ibn 'Abbaas (radiyallaahu 'anhu), himself used to come to the doors of the Companions in the hottest part of the day just to ask them about a hadeeth, which will, if Allaah wills, be shown later in the book. Indeed one of them would be such that a hadeeth would pass him by and due to that he would become sick and so ill that he would have to stay in bed, as happened to Shu'bah ibn al-Hajjaaj (may Allaah have mercy on him). He said, "I sit for revising hadeeth and if I find that I have missed one, I become ill."¹⁶

The Salaf used to crowd around the gatherings of knowledge to such an extent that the reason why Hushaim (may Allaah have mercy on him) died was due to the crowding of the students upon him. As al-Khattaabee (may Allaah have mercy on him) said, "The students of hadeeth crowded and crushed around Hushaim to such a degree that they crushed him against his donkey and this was the cause of his death,"¹⁷ and "It would happen that they would run in the pathways in order to meet the gatherings of knowledge, as Shu'bah ibn al-Hajjaaj (may Allaah have mercy on him) said, 'I have not seen anyone ever who runs except that I would say he is a crazy man or he is a student of hadeeth.'¹⁸ Whoever knows the excellence of knowledge and its delight will never cease to seek an increase in that, he will always be keen upon that knowledge and he will be insatiable. Just as Allaah's Messenger (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) said, "There are two avid ones who crave and cannot be satisfied: one who craves knowledge and he will not be satisfied, and one who craves this world and he will not be satisfied."¹⁹

¹² Reported by al-Khateeb al-Baghdaadee in Al-Jaami' li-Akhlaaqir-Raawee wa Aadaabis-Saami' (2/129/130), and by al-Bayhaqee in Madkhal ilas-Sunanil-Kubraa (no.606).

¹³ Ibid., (2/130) and (no.607) in Al-Madkhal.

¹⁴ One of the narrators of the hadeeth of az-Zuhree.

¹⁵ A hadeeth that is hasan due to its supports, as I have clarified in Saheeh Kitaabil-Adhkaar wa da'eefih, (4/4).

¹⁶ Sharaf Ashaabil-Hadeeth, (page 115).

¹⁷ Quoted in AL-'Uzlah, (p.101).

¹⁸ Al-Khateeb al-Baghdaadee in Al-Jaami' li-Akhlaaqir-Raawee wa Aadaabis-Saami' (1/152).

¹⁹ Reported by al-Haakim (1/92) and al-Bayhaqee in Madkhal ilas-Sunanil-Kubraa (no.451) by way of Qataadah, from Anas. It was declared saheeh to the standard of the two shaykhs by al-Haakim, and adh-Dhahabee agreed. However our Shaykh commented in correction of their saying in his annotation upon Al-Mishkaat (no.260), saying, 'Its weakness is that Qataadah is a mudallis and narrates with 'an'anah (i.e., failing to state clearly that he heard it directly from the person he named.' [Trans. note]). But it has another chain of narration from Hammaad ibn Muslim, from Humayd, from Anas. This is reported by al-Bayhaqee in Shu'abul-Eemaan (no.10279) and in Madkhal ilas-Sunanil-Kubraa (no.450) and Ibnul-Jawzee in al Ilalul-Mutanaahiyah (no.113) and Ibn 'Adiyy in Al-Kaamil (6/2298). I say, Its chain of narration contains weakness, as declared by Ibn 'Adiyy and Ibn al-Jawzee.

It is also further witness from the hadeeth of Ibn 'Abbas (may Allaah have be pleased with them both) reported by Aboo Khaythamah in Al-'Ilm (no.141), al-Bazaar (no.163), at-Tabaraanee in Al-Kabeer (no.11095) and Al-Awsat (no.190, of Majma'ul-Bahrayn). Al-Bazaar said, `Layth (ibn Abee Sulaym, one of its narrators) became confused, so there remains weakness in his narrations, and we do not know it to be reported in any way better than this.' Al-Haythumee said in Majma'uz-Zawaa'id (1/135), `It contains Layth ibn Abee Sulaym who is weak (da'eef).' I say Layth ibn Abee Sulaym is a mudallis who became mixed up (mukhtalat), so the matter is as the two of them said.

It is also reported by ad-Daarimee (1/96) as the saying of Ibn 'Abbaas (mawqoof), and what is correct is its being marfoo' (being traced back to the Prophet (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam)). It also has a witness from the hadeeth of 'Abdullaah ibn Mas'ood (t). It is also reported by at-Tabaraanee in Al-Kabeer (no.10388), al-Qudaa'ee in Musnad ash-Shihaab'(no.322), Ibn 'Adiyy in Al-Kaamil (4/1357), Ibn al-Jawzee in Al-'Ilalul-Mutanaaahiyah (no.211) and al-Haythumee said in Majma'uz-Zawaa'id (1/350), 'Its chain contains Aboo Bakr ad-Daahiree and he is weak.' It is also reported by al-Bayhaqee in Madkhal ilas-Sunanil-Kubraa (p.300) and ad-Daarimee (1/96) as the saying of 'Abdullaah ibn Mas'ood (mawqoof). Al-Bayhaqee said, "This is mawqoof and it is disconnected (munqati')." So in summary the hadeeth is established through their chains and witnesses and this is clearly stated by as-Sakhaawee in Maqaasidul-Hasanah (no.1206) where he said, 'Even though its individual chains are weak, yet together they cause it to be strong.' And Allaah knows best.

Chapter Three

KNOWLEDGE IS TO BE COME TO

The description of 'Umar ibn al-Khattaab (radiyallaahu 'anhu) that they, `... were sitting with Allaah's Messenger (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) ...' and his saying, `... when a man came to us ...' contains a proof that the scholar is to be come to in his gathering. Because from the right of the scholar is that the people should come to him and not that he should go to them. Therefore it is befitting upon the scholar that he should preserve his honour and should raise himself above proceeding to the house of those who want knowledge, because this is humiliation for the knowledge and is degrading for that knowledge that the scholar, who is the teacher, has to take it and carry it to the house of the student who is learning. So those Companions (radiyallaahu 'anhum) were not too proud to come to the gatherings of knowledge, and likewise Jibreel (alaihis-salaam) he came to it, to educate the Companions (radiyallaahu 'anhum) and as an indication for them of the right of knowledge upon the student.

This was the way proceeded upon by the Salaf (radiyallaahu 'anhum). From Ibn 'Abbaas (radiyallaahu 'anhu) who said, "When Allaah's Messenger (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) was taken in death, I said to a man from the Ansaar, `Come let us go and ask questions from the Companions of Allaah's Messenger (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) because today they are many.' So he said, `How surprising for you, Ibn 'Abbaas, do you see the people having a need of you whilst among the people there are many of the Companions of Allaah's Messenger (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) So that person left this idea, but I went and I asked questions of the Companions of Allaah's Messenger (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam). I asked them about the ahaadeeth, so that whenever I would hear that a man had a hadeeth, I would go to his door and if he was having a siesta (Qaylolah),²⁰ I would lay down at his door and the wind would scatter dust upon me so he would come out and say, `O son of the uncle of Allaah's Messenger! What has brought you here? Why didn't you send a message to me that I should come to you?' So he said, `There is more right upon me that I should come to you and ask you about the hadeeth.' He said, `Therefore that man of the Ansaar who didn't ask, lived until he saw me and the people had gathered around me asking me questions.' And the man of the Ansaar said, `This young man was more intelligent than me.'"²¹ This was taken on by the taabi'een and those who followed them upon good, continuing until Imaam Maalik (may Allaah have mercy on him) said his famous saying, whose fame has spread far and wide, "Knowledge is to be come to, it does not come to you."

²⁰ i.e., sleeping at the time of the midday heat and it is a Sunnah of the Prophet (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) due to the saying of Allaah's Messenger (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam), "**Have siesta because the devils do not have siesta,**" and it is a hadeeth which is hasan brought by Shaykh al-Albaanee in Silsilatus-Saheehah, no. 1647.

²¹ Reported by al-Haakim and al-Bayhaqee in his Madkhal ilas-Sunan (no. 673) and al-Khateeb in his excellent book Al-Jaami' li-Akhlaaqir-Raawee wa Aadabaais-Saami' (1/158~159) (106~107), (The Book Gathering the Manners of the Narrator and the Manners of those who listen to the Narrations). Also collected by Ibn 'Abdul-Barr in Jaami' Bayaanil-'Ilm wa Fadlihi (1/85), and concerning this narration al-Haakim said, "**... and it is a fundamental principle with regard to seeking hadeeth and giving respect to the muhaddith.**" And I say: in this narration there are contained the manners for the students and from these manners are:

(i) Not causing hardship to the shaykhs in other than the time of the gathering and not troubling them in their free time and in their private times, and the time for their families and in time of their siesta.

(ii) The excellence of seeking knowledge at a young age. That it is more useful and beneficial to do that. So how much the students of knowledge need to bring on board these manners that are good and pleasing and take on these manners of eemaan, so that they can return as the model for the revival of the scholarly knowledge based salafee call.

Preserving the Honour of Knowledge and Respecting it

So in this way, the people of knowledge preserved the honour of knowledge-so it was a preservation of their honour. They caused it to be something that they respected and gave honour to, so it became an honour for them and how truly 'Alee ibn Abdul-'Azeez al-Jurjaanee spoke when he said:

"The people say to me that, `You withdraw and keep away from the people.'

But what they have seen is just a man who keeps away from humiliation.

I see that the people are such that whoever is close to them,

Then he is held in contempt by them,

And whoever has respect for his own self then he is the noble one.

I have not ceased keeping aloof from the people with my honour to one side,

Keeping away from fault finding as a safeguard, And I regard it as profit to do so.

I would not have fulfilled the right of knowledge if every time a desire appeared before me, I used knowledge as a ladder to climb upon to attain it.

If it is said to me, `There is a watering place here ...'

Then I will say, `I can see it.'

However the soul of the free person can pot up with being thirsty.

Every burst of lightning that appears in front of me does not excite me,

And I am not pleased that I should take everyone from the people of the earth as benefactors.

I have not expended my soul in the service of knowledge ...

In order that I should be a servant to whoever I meet

rather-that I should be served.

Did I go through straitened circumstances for it, in order to plant and establish it

And then have to harvest humiliation as a result of that?

In that case following ignorance would have been wiser for me.

If the people of knowledge had only preserved the honour of knowledge

It would have preserved their honour.

If they had given it honour in the hearts of the people it would have been honoured.

But they debased it and therefore they were degraded

And they (disfigured it due to their own greedy desires,

So that it's appearance looked ugly. "²²

²² Refer necessarily to Al-Jaarni' li-Akhlaaqir-Raawee wa Aadaabaais Saami (1/371) and Yateematud Dahr (4/23).

And coming to the people of knowledge in their gatherings shows honour and respect for the knowledge, just as Ma'mar said, "I heard az-Zuhree say, 'I used to come to the door of 'Urwah ibn az-Zubair and I would sit there waiting, but then I would go off not having entered upon him. But if I had wanted to I could have entered. Out of honour and respect for him."²³ This matter causes pleasure to the souls of the bearers of knowledge. So from Ibn 'Abbaas (may Allaah be pleased with them both) who said, "I found most of the knowledge of Allaah's Messenger (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) with this small group of the Ansaar. I would have my siesta outside the door of one of them, and if I had wanted to get permission to enter, he would have easily granted me permission to enter, but I sought through that to seek his good pleasure."²⁴

Beware of the Doors of the Rulers

Something that deserves to be pointed out at this place is that the people of knowledge should keep away from the door of the ruler. Sufyaan ath-Thawree (may Allaah have mercy on him) said in the advice which he gave to 'Abbaad,²⁵ "And beware of the rulers, of drawing close to them and of mixing with them in anything from the affairs. Beware of being fooled so that it is said to you, 'Intercede with them, and repel some harm from a person being oppressed ... or help one being oppressed to receive his right,' because this is one of the deceptive traps of Iblees. And it is something which the evil reciters use as a means for their own benefit."

Ibn al-Jawziyy (may Allaah have mercy on him) said in *Talbees Iblees* (pp. 121~122), "And from the deceptions of Iblees upon the scholars is their mixing with the rulers and the kings, their flattering them and failure to correct them when they are able to do so. Maybe they make allowances for them where there is no allowance for them, in order to attain some worldly benefit. So this produces corruption from three angles.

Firstly, the ruler is corrupted by that. He says, 'If I were not upon what is correct, the scholar would correct me. And how can I not be correct when he is eating from my wealth?'

Secondly, the common person because he says, 'There is no harm in this ruler, nor in his wealth, nor in his actions, because such and such scholar, does not criticise him.'

Thirdly, the scholar (himself) is corrupted by that. Because he corrupts his religion through this practice, and Iblees has deceived them into entering upon the rulers by saying to them, 'You will just enter to intercede for the benefit of a Muslim.' This deception is uncovered by the fact that if somebody besides him were to enter upon the ruler instead that would not please him. **In conclusion, entering upon the rulers contains very great danger. Because the intention may be good at the beginning then it may change due to the fact that the rulers honour them and bestow gifts upon them or due to the fact that they start having desires for what they possess, and so he becomes unable to prevent himself from flattering them, and abandons correcting them.** Sufyaan ath-Thawree (may Allaah have mercy on him) said, 'I do not fear about the rulers humiliating me. Rather what I fear from them is that they should honour me, so that my heart should incline towards them.'"

Ibn Rajab al-Hanbalee said in his book, *Sharh Hadeethidh-Dhi`baan* (the hadeeth about the two hungry wolves), "Many of the salaf used to forbid entry upon the rulers even for those who wanted to go to command them with good and to forbid them from evil. From those who forbade this were 'Umar ibn Abdul-'Azeez, Ibn al-Mubaarak, ath-Thawree and others. Ibn al-Mubaarak said, 'The one who commands and forbids them in our view is not the one who enters upon them and commands and forbids them. Rather the one who commands and forbids them is the one that keeps away from them.' The reason for this is what is to be feared from the trial of entering upon them. Because a person's soul may give an individual the false impression, when he is far away from them, that he

²³ Reported by Aboo Nu'aim in *Al-Hilyah* (3/362), al-Bayhaqee in his *Madkhal ilas-Sunan* (no. 675) and al-Khateeb in *Al-Jaamii' il-Akhlaaqir-Raawee wa Aadaabaais-Saami'* (1 / 159).

²⁴ Reported by Aboo Khaythamah in *Al-Ilm* (no. 133) and al-Bayhaqee in *Madkhal ilas-Sunan* (no. 674) and al-Khateeb in *Al-Faqeeh wal-Mutafaqqih* (2/142) and also in *Al-Jaamii' il-Akhlaaqir-Raawee wa Aadaabaais-Saami'* (1 / 159).

²⁵ This is a comprehensive and well-known piece of advice. It is advice involving manners, wisdom, matters of admonition and examples and it is something well-known and well-read by the people of knowledge. I have commented upon and explained it in my book *Min Wasaayas-Salaf*, pages 19~25.

will order them and forbid them and be severe with them. But when he sees them from nearby, then his soul inclines towards them, because love of honour is something hidden within the souls. So he flatters them and is mild with them, he may even incline towards them and love them, particularly if they treat him with kindness and honour and he accepts that from them. This occurred with 'Abdullaah ibn Taawoos along with one of the rulers in the presence of his father, Taawoos. So Taawoos rebuked his son for this. Sufyaan ath-hawree wrote to 'Abbaad ibn 'Abbaad and in the letter he wrote, `Beware of the rulers, beware of drawing close to them or mingling with them in anything from the affairs."

And the great scholar of Andalus, Ibn 'Abdul-Barr (may Allaah have mercy on him) said in his book, Jaami' Bayaanil-Ilm (1 / 185~186) at the end of the chapter in which he mentioned how the Salaf used to criticise entry upon the rulers and the kings, "The meaning of all of this chapter is that it refers to a tyrant and an evil ruler. However, as for the just and noble one amongst them, then entering upon him and seeing him and helping him upon doing good is one of the most excellent actions of good. Do you not see that 'Umar ibn Abdul-'Azeez used to have as his companions the best of the scholars at the time, such as 'Urwah ibn az-Zubair and his level, and Ibn Shihaab (i.e., az-Zuhree) and his level? Ibn Shihaab used to enter upon the ruler 'Abdul-Malik and his sons after him as well and from them who used to enter upon the rulers as well were ash-Sha'bee, Qabeesah, Ibn Dhu'ayb and Raj'aa ibn Haywat al-Kindee and Abul-Miqdaam - and he was a noble scholar - al-Hasan al-Basree, Abuz Zinaad, Maalik ibn Anas, al-Awzaa'ee, ash-Shaafi'ee and a whole group of others who would be too many to mention. So if the scholar enters upon the ruler now and again when there is a need for that and he says something good and he speaks with his knowledge, then this is good. This is a matter wherein lies the Pleasure of Allaah until the Day when he meets Him. **However, there being gatherings that are a trial is more usually the case, and remaining safe is by keeping away from that.**"

I say: he has spoken truly and well and given sincere advice, may Allaah have mercy upon him. Since they were like naked warners who do not lie to their people. How could they not be like that when they had heard the saying of Allaah's Messenger (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam), **"Whoever comes to the ruler is put to trial."** ²⁶ And it is befitting that the people of knowledge be like Aboo Haazim, because 'Abdur-Rahmaan ibn Khaalid sent him a message and said, "Come to us so that we can ask you questions and you can narrate to us." So Aboo Haazim said, "Allaah's refuge is sought from that. I met the people of knowledge and they did not carry the Religion to the people of the world, and I will not be the first to do that. So if you have any need, then send news of it to us." So 'Abdur-Rahmaan went out to him and met him and he said to him, "You have increased in honour over us."²⁷ Yoosuf ibn Asbaat said, "I heard Sufyaan ath-Thawree say, `If you see a reciter resorting to the door of a ruler then know that he is a thief. And if you see him resorting to the rich people then know he is one who does things for show.'"²⁸

²⁶ Reported by Aboo Daawood (no. 2859), at-Tirmidhee (no. 2256), an-Nasaa'ee (7/195~96), Ahmad (1/357) and others, by way of Sufyaan: from Aboo Moosaa: from Wahb ibn Munnabih: from Ibn 'Abbaas. Its chain of narration is weak due to the fact that Aboo Moosaa is unknown (majhool). However it has another chain reported by, al-Bayhaqee in Shu'abul-Eemaan (3/2/248) that strengthens it, if Allaah so wills. It also has two narrations that witness to its correctness and I have brought and referenced them in my treatise, Ar-Riyaa, Dhammuhu wa Atharuhus-Sayyi Fil-Ummah, (p. 34). So through them it is authentic and all praise is for Allaah at the beginning and the end.

²⁷ Reported in Hilyatul-Awliyaa, (3/238).

²⁸ Ibid. (6/387).

Chapter Four

THE SCHOLAR SHOULD RECTIFY HIS APPEARANCE

In the saying of 'Umar (radiyallaahu 'anhu) describing Jibreel (alaihis-salaam) there occurs, " .. his clothes were very white and his hair was very black. No trace of journeying could be seen upon him ..." this contains a proof that in his gatherings and when he is narrating hadeeth, it is befitting that the scholar and the teacher should be in his best and most complete appearance and should have his best adornment. He should take care and prepare himself for this by putting himself in order in such a manner as will adorn him in front of those present, those who agree with him and those who disagree with him.

His clothing

Likewise the Believer loves that his garment should be clean and his shoes should be fine. So from 'Abdullaah ibn Mas'ood (radiyallaahu 'anhu) from the Prophet (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) who said, **"Nobody will enter Paradise who has in his heart a mustard seed of pride."** So a man said, **"But a man likes that his clothing should be good and his shoes should be fine."** So the Prophet (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) said, **"Indeed Allaah is beautiful and loves that which is beautiful. Pride is haughty rejection of the truth and having contempt for the people."**²⁹

So it is recommenced for him that he should wear white clothing as was the clothing of Jibreel (alaihis-salaam) when the Companions saw him and likewise Allaah's Messenger (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) said, **"Wear from your garments those that are white, because they are from the best of your garments, and shroud your dead in them."**³⁰

However, he should avoid wearing the very finest of clothes, for fear of fame and standing out amongst the people and for fear of drawing the people's attention towards him. This is from humility, just as Allaah's Messenger (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) said, **"Whoever abandoned fine clothing out of humility to Allaah and he is able to wear it, then Allaah will call him on the Day of Resurrection at the head of all the people until He gives him the choice to wear whichever garments of the people of Eemaan he wants."**³¹

Taking Care of One's Hair

It is upon him also that he should take care of his hair and put right any hair that is disorderly. He should oil and perfume it due to the saying of Allaah's Messenger (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam), **"Whoever has hair, then let him take care of it."**³²

And if he has any grey hairs, he should change them with dye, in order to be contrary to the Jews and the Christians, and what is recommended is that he dyes with henna and with **`katam' (a plant which gives a dark red, blackish dye)**. From Aboo Hurairah that Allaah's Messenger (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) said, **"The Jews and the Christians do not dye, so act contrary to**

²⁹ Reported by Muslim, no. 91 and 148

³⁰ Reported by Aboo Daawood (nos. 3878 and 4061), at-Tirmidhee (no. 994), Ibn Majaah (nos. 1472 and 3561) and others, from the hadeeth of Ibn 'Abbaas (radiyallaahu 'anhu). The hadeeth is declared authentic by at-Tirmidhee and al-Haakim, adh-Dhahabee agreed and Shaykh al-Albanee agreed. At-Tirmidhee commented upon this hadeeth saying, **"... and this is what the people of knowledge love."**

³¹ It is authentic due to its different chains as I have made clear in my book, At-Tawaadu' fee daw'il-Kitaab was-Sunnatis-Saheehah, (p. 12).

³² Reported by Aboo Daawood (no. 4163) and others from the hadeeth of Aboo Hurairah (radiyallaahu 'anhu). Declared authentic by our Shaykh Al-Albanee in As-Saheehah, (no. 500).

them."³³ Ash-Shawkaanee (may Allaah have mercy on him) said in Nailul-Awtaar (1/148) commenting upon this hadeeth, "This shows that the reason for the prescription of dyeing the hair and changing grey hairs is to be contrary to the Jews and the Christians. So this shows that the recommendation is something emphasized. Allaah's Messenger (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) used to very greatly differ from the People of the Book and he used to command that. **And this is a Sunnah which the salaf have given great importance to. Therefore you will see the people of history in biographies will very often say, `... and he used to dye his hair or he had not used to dye his hair.'**"

Ibn al-Jawziyy said, "A group from the Companions and the Taabi'een used to apply dye and Ahmad ibn Hanbal when he had seen a man who had dyed his beard said, `I can see a man who has revived something that has died from the Sunnah,' and he became very happy when he saw the man who had dyed his beard. **But it is upon him that in dyeing, he should avoid using black dye.** From Jaabir ibn 'Abdullaah (radiyallaahu 'anhu) who said, "Aboo Quhaafah was brought on the day of the conquest of Makkah and his hair and his beard were extremely white like the `Thagaamah"³⁴ (a white plant). So Allaah's Messenger (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) said, `**Change this with something and avoid black.**'"³⁵

His Fragrance

It is also upon him that he should avoid any foods whose smell is disliked, such as garlic, onions, leeks and particularly smoking-which is an affliction that has befallen many of the people. So the gatherings of knowledge are attended and surrounded by the Angels and they are harmed by the things that cause harm to the children of Adam. In a narration of the same hadeeth (of Jibreel) reported by an-Nasaa'ee there occurs the wording, "**There came a man who was the best of the people in the appearance of his face and he was the best smelling of the people. It was as if his clothes had never been touched by dirt.**"

So in summary, it is upon that person that he should keep up upon the characteristics of the **fitrah, (the sunnah followed by the Prophets)**. From 'Aa'ishah(radiyallaahu 'anha), who said, "Allaah's Messenger (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) said, `Ten things are from the fitrah. Clipping the moustache, leaving the beard, using the siwaak (tooth-stick), cleaning out the nose with water, clipping the nails, washing the parts between the fingers, plucking the hair from the armpits, shaving the private parts and using water.'" Zakkariyya³⁶ said, "Mus'ab³⁷ said, `I have forgotten the tenth one unless it was taking water in the mouth while making wudoo.'" And Qutaybah³⁸ said, "Wakee³⁹ said, `Usage of water means using it to clean oneself after using the toilet'"⁴⁰

³³ Reported by al-Bukhaaree (10/354, AL-Fath) and Muslim (no. 2103).

³⁴ A white plant having white flowers and fruits.

³⁵ Reported by Muslim (no. 2102).

³⁶ He is Ibn Abee Zaa'idah, one of the narrators in the chain of narration.

³⁷ He is Ibn Shaibah, the next narrator in the chain.

³⁸ He is Ibn Saeed, one of the Shaikhs who narrated the hadeeth to Muslim.

³⁹ He is Ibn al-Jarrah ibn Maleeh, the narrator from Zakariyya.

⁴⁰ Reported by Muslim (no. 261).

Chapter Five

HONOURING AND RESPECTING THE GATHERINGS OF KNOWLEDGE

In the saying of 'Umar ibn al-Khattaab (radiyallaahu 'anhu) there occurs "... until Jibreel came to the Prophet (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam), and he put his two knees against his two knees and he placed his hands upon his thighs."⁴¹ (In this) there is a proof for the obligation of respecting the gatherings of knowledge and for sitting in front of and with the people of knowledge, in a way showing manners and humility.

There occurs in the hadeeth of Aboo Dharr and Aboo Hurairah (may Allaah be pleased with them both) in the narration of an-Nasaa'ee, that they both said, "Allaah's Messenger (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) used to sit along with his Companions and a stranger would come and not know which one was him, and would not know which one to ask. Therefore, we sought from Allaah's Messenger (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) that we should be allowed to make him a special sitting place, so that the stranger would know him when he came to him. So we built for him a small seat made of clay and he used to sit upon it. We were sitting around and Allaah's Messenger (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) was in his sitting place when a man came, who was the best of the people in face and he smelt the best of all the people and his clothes were such that it was as if no dirt had touched them. So he gave salaam at the edge of the carpet, saying, 'As-salaamu alaika, O Muhammad.' So he responded and replied to his salaam and then Jibreel said, 'Shall I come near, O Muhammad?' He said, "Draw near," and so he continued saying, 'Shall I draw near?' and he was saying to him, "Come near," to the point that he placed his hands upon the two knees of Allaah's Messenger (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam)"

The Respect that the Companions used to Give to Allaah's Messenger (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam)

When the Companions (radiyallaahu 'anhum) sat with the Prophet (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam), they would be still and silent as if they had birds on their heads. From Aboo Sa'eed al-Khudree (radiyallaahu 'anhu), "**That Allaah's Messenger (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) stood upon the minbar and said, 'What I fear for you after me is just that the blessings of the earth will be opened up for you,'** and then he mentioned the worldly pleasures, he mentioned the first and continued with the second. Then a man stood up and said, 'O Messenger of Allaah, will good produce evil?' So the Prophet (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) remained silent and we said, 'He is receiving Revelation.' The people remained silent as if they had birds upon their heads."⁴²

Ibnul-Anbaaree said, "Their saying, 'The people whilst sitting with this person were as though they had birds upon their heads,' has two meanings. **One meaning** of it is that the people were so still and were not moving at all, and they were lowering their gaze, because a bird only settles on something that is very still. So if a person is calm and composed, it is said about him, 'He is as still as if he had a bird upon his head.'

The second saying is that (Prophet) Sulaymaan the son of Daawood (alaihis-salaam) used to say to the wind, 'Blow upon us,' and he used to say to the birds, 'Give us shade.' So the wind would blow calmly upon him and his companions and the birds would shade them. His companions in his presence would keep their eyes down out of respect and out of awe before Sulaymaan (alaihis-salaam). They would be still and not move, and would not speak with anything unless he

⁴¹ This is a sitting, which resembles the manner of sitting in the tashahhud for the Prayer. This was the practice of the students of knowledge to the point that they came to be known as 'The People of the Companions of the Knees,' and this is how they used to sit in the gatherings of knowledge.

⁴² Reported by al-Bukhaaree, (Eng. trans. vol. 4, no. 95).

asked them question, whereupon they would respond to him. So therefore it is said about a people when they are still and quiet, 'They are dignified scholars as if they have birds over their heads,' meaning they resemble the companions of Sulaymaan (alaihis-salaam)."⁴³

Some of the Companions (radiyallaahu 'anhum) would not look at the face of Allaah's Messenger (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) but would just take a glance at him, and this was due to their respect for him. They used to lower their gaze when they sat in his presence to the point that if one of them wanted to describe his appearance they would not have been able to describe him. 'Abdur-Rahmaan ibn Shumasaasah al-Mihree said, "We were present along with 'Amr ibn al-Aas and he was at the point of death. He was weeping for a long time, he turned his face towards the wall and his son started saying to him, 'O my father, did not Allaah's Messenger (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) give you the good news of such and such?'

See he turned with this face and he said, 'The best thing that we can count upon is the testification that, 'None has the right to be worshipped except Allaah and Muhammad is the Messenger of Allaah.' As for me, then I went through three phases. I witnessed myself and nobody hated Allaah's Messenger (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) more than I did and there was nothing more beloved to me than that I should be able to get hold of him and kill him. So if I would have died upon that state I would have been from the people of the Fire. Then Allaah placed Islaam in my heart, so I came to the Prophet (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) and I said, 'Stretch out your right hand so that I may give you pledge of allegiance.' He stretched out his right hand (but) I withdrew my hand.

So he said, '**What is wrong with you, O 'Amr?**' I said, 'I wanted to make a condition.' He said, '**To make what condition?**' I said, 'That I should be forgiven.' So the Prophet (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) said, '**Do you not know that Islaam wipes away whatever came before it and that migration wipes away whatever came before it, and that Hajj wipes away whatever came before it?**' Then 'Amr ibn al-Aas said, '**And there was nobody more beloved to me than Allaah's Messenger (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam), nor greater in my eyes than him, but I was not able to look straight at him, out of respect for him. If I was asked to describe him, I wouldn't be able, because I had not looked straight at him.** If I had died in that state I would have hoped that I should be from the people of Paradise. Then we took charge of affairs and I don't know what my state is from these affairs. So if I die, then let no wailing woman accompany me nor any fire, and when you bury me then scatter the earth upon me and then remain around my grave for such a time as you would be able to sacrifice some camels and distribute their meat, in order that I should take comfort from your presence and that I may see what answer I give to the messengers of my Lord."⁴⁴

How the Taabi'een gave respect to the Scholars and their Gatherings

The Taabi'een and those after them followed this same way. Mugheerah said, "We used to have awe of Ibraaheem just as the people would have awe of their ruler."⁴⁵ Ayyoob said, "A man used to sit with al-Hasan for three years but not ask him anything out of respect and awe of him." 'Abdur-Rahmaan Ibn Hurmulah al-Aslamee said, "No person would be bold enough to ask any question of Sa'eed ibn al-Musayyib until he asked permission from him." Ibnul-Khayyaat said in praise of Maalik ibn Anas, "Answers would be left and he would not be asked again out of awe and the people asking questions would lower the heads with their chins hanging down. He manifested the light of nobility and the honour of a king in piety. He was one held in awe even though he was not a ruler."

Aboo 'Aasim said, "We were in the presence of Ibn 'Awn and he was narrating hadeeth. So Ibraaheem ibn 'Abdur-Rahmaan ibn al-Hasan passed by with a mounted escort. And he was at that time acclaimed as being a ruler after his brother Muhammad had been killed, but nobody dared to even look at him, not to mention getting up, out of respect and awe for Ibn Awn."⁴⁶

⁴³ Al-Khateeb in Al-Jaami' li-Akhlaaqir-Raawee wa Aadaabaais Saami', (1/192~193).

⁴⁴ Reported by Muslim, (no. 121).

⁴⁵ And Ibraaheem was Ibraaheem ibn Yazeed ibn Qays an-Nakha'ee.

⁴⁶ He was 'Abdullaah ibn Awn ibn Artat al-Basree.

This was due to the fact that knowledge in their understanding was something practical, and something which changed the manners of a person and led him towards good. Knowledge was not just a case, with them, of gathering facts in order to compete with the foolish people, to debate with the scholars, to show off in front of the common people and to attain the head of gatherings.

Al-Hasan said, "It used to be the case that a man would seek knowledge and would not remain for long before its effect would be seen in his humility, in his manners, upon his tongue and in his sight and in his hand."⁴⁷

It is befitting that the scholars cause their students to honour the gatherings of knowledge and cause them to have respect in the souls of their students. That they direct them and put them right if they make any mistake.

Ahmad ibn Sulaymaan al-Qattaan said, "It used to be the case with 'Abdur-Rahmaan ibn Mahdee that nobody would speak in his gathering, nor would anyone sharpen a pen, nor would anyone smile. If anyone spoke or sharpened a pen he would shout, put on his shoes and go to his house. Likewise with Ibn Numayr-and he was one of the strictest of the people in this. He would become angry and shout, and if he saw anyone sharpening a pen his face would alter. Also the people in the gathering of Wakee' would sit as if they were in prayer, and if he saw them doing anything he disliked he would put on his shoes and enter his house."⁴⁸

Correct Behavior of the Students

I am very surprised at youths who, when they sit in a gathering of knowledge, you see them troubling the scholar in his gathering and competing with him. When the scholar is asked a question he seeks to precede him with the answer, and if the scholar's answer does not please him you find him winking at his associates.

Aboo 'Aasim an-Nabeel said, "I witnessed Sufyaan ath-Thawree and a youth from the people of knowledge was present at his gathering, and he was behaving as if he were the head of the gathering, speaking out, showing his importance by the knowledge over those: older than him. So Sufyaan became angry and said, 'The Salaf were not like this. One of them had not used to claim leadership, nor would he sit at the head of a gathering until he had sought this knowledge for thirty years. But you give yourself importance over those older than you. Get up and leave me, and I do not want to see you near my gathering.'" He said, "And I heard Sufyaan ath-Thawree say, 'If you see a youth speaking out in the presence of the Shaikhs, even if he has reached a level of knowledge, then despair of his being good, because he has little shame."⁴⁹

I say: Sufyaan spoke truly and well, for the Salaf were upon a high level of manners. It is reported from Ibn 'Umar (may Allaah be pleased with them both) that he said, "Allaah's Messenger (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) said, '**The example of the Believer is like that of a green tree; its leaves do not fall, nor wither away.**' So the people began saying, 'It is such and such tree.' Ibn 'Umar said, 'So I wanted to say that it was the date-palm tree, but I was a young youth and so felt ashamed (to speak).' So Allaah's Messenger said, 'It is the date-palm.'"⁵⁰ Al-Bayhaqee commented upon this hadeeth saying, "'Abdullaah ibn 'Umar felt ashamed due to his young age, to speak out in the presence of the elders."

This was something praiseworthy from him. 'Umar (radiyallaahu 'anhu) desired that his son should speak out in order to show his knowledge, and the Prophet (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) had questioned his Companions about that tree. So informing about it would not have been bad manners, since he asked them so that if they did not know he could inform them of it. And Allaah knows best."⁵¹

⁴⁷ All these reports are from Al-Jaami' li-Akhlaaqir-Raawee wa Aadaabaais Saami', (1/184~185) and Jaami Bayaan al-Ilm, (1/127).

⁴⁸ Al-Jaami' li-Akhlaaqir-Raawee wa Aadaabaais Saami', (1/193)

⁴⁹ Reported by al-Bayhaqee in Al-Madkhal ilas-Sunanil-Kubraa', (no. 679).

⁵⁰ Reported by al-Bukhaaree (Eng. trans. vol. 1, nos. 58 and 59) and Mustim (no. 2811).

⁵¹ Al-Madkhal ilas-Sunanil-Kubraa', (no. 683).

Then you see one of them sitting with one leg resting upon the other, and he might even have his feet pointing towards the scholar. If you were to ask him about something he could only manage laughter. So it is fitting that the saying of Aboo Zayd ad-Daboosee⁵² be quoted in his regard:

"Why is it that when I overcome him with a proof against him,
He meets me with laughter?
If laughter were a sign of a person's knowledge-
Then none would be more knowledgeable than that
beast of the desert."

Or the saying of Sufyaan ibn 'Uyainah, "'Ubaydullaah ibn 'Umar came to us in Koofah a long time ago. When he saw the students of knowledge and how badly the knowledge was being treated he said, `You have disgraced the knowledge and its people. If 'Umar had reached me and you he would have given us a painful beating.'"⁵³

And how fine is the saying of al-Layth ibn Sa'd, who one day saw something reprehensible from the students of hadeeth and said, "You have a greater need for a small amount of good manners than you do for a great deal of knowledge."⁵⁴

However it is fitting that correction is done in a way that will make the affair easy and not cause difficulties, and will cause them to be cheerful and not repel them. Since gentleness is never applied to anything except that it adorns it, and it is not plucked away from anything except that it is rendered ugly, and Allaah loves gentleness in all affairs.

Educating by Example

It is upon the scholar and teacher that he avoids joking with the people of his gathering in the gathering, since this removes the sense of reverence and causes respect to depart. Because if he jokes with one who is noble he will resent him for that, and if he jokes with a lowly person it will cause him to become bold and forward with him. Joking eats up respect just as fire consumes dry wood.

Mis'ar ibn Kidaam al-Hilaalee said as advice to his son:⁵⁵

"I have granted you, O Kidaam, my sincere advice,
So listen to the saying of a father who sincerely wishes well for you.
As for joking and arguing-then leave both of them,
They are two traits that I am not pleased with for a close-friend,
I have tried them both and not found them,
To be a good companion for a neighbour or a friend.
And stupidity will only cause a young man to be ridiculed amongst his people,
And it will not matter to them how fine his lineage is."

Furthermore the wise scholars of this ummah used to teach fine character and good manners to their students. Al-Hasan ibn Ismaa'eel said, "I heard my father say, `In the gathering of Ahmad

⁵² Al-Fawaa'idul-Bahiyyah fee taraajimil-Hanafiyyah, (p. 109).

⁵³ Al-Jaami' li-Akhlaaqir-Raawee wa Aadaabaais-Saami', (1/405).

⁵⁴ Al-Jaami' li-Akhlaaqir-Raawee wa Aadaabaais-Saami', (1/405).

⁵⁵ Ibid.

around five thousand people or more would gather. Less than five hundred would write narrations, **and the rest would be learning good manners and correct behaviour from him.**"⁵⁶

⁵⁶ Manaajibul-Imaam Ahmad ibn Hanbal of Ibn al-Jawzee, (p. 210).

Chapter Six

ASKING QUESTIONS IS THE KEY TO KNOWLEDGE

The fact that Jibreel (alaihis-salaam) asked questions to Allaah's Messenger (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) about Islaam, eemaan and ihsaan, the Last Hour and its signs, contains proof that asking questions is the key to knowledge and this is stated in the Mighty Book:

Ask the people of the Reminder, if you do not know. Soorah an-Nahl (16):43 and Soorah al-Anbiyaa (21):7.

Also Allaah's Messenger (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) stated that it is a cure for ignorance, as occurs in the hadeeth of the man who had the head fracture, where he said, **"Why didn't they ask when they were ignorant? Indeed the cure for not knowing is to ask."**⁵⁷

And since the matter is as I have explained, then asking questions in a good way will assist in that matter, because whoever asks a question in a good way will learn. Therefore the great scholar, Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah (may Allaah have mercy on him) said in Miftaah Daaris-Sa'aadah, "And knowledge has six levels. The first of them is asking questions in a good manner ... there are some people who are prevented from it (knowledge) because they do not ask questions in a good manner, either because they never ask questions, or because they ask a question about something when something else is more important than it. Like the person who asks about superfluous things ignorance of which will not harm him, but leaves those things which are essential for him to know. **This is the condition of many of the foolish students.**"

Mujaahid said, "Knowledge will not be learnt by one who is too shy, nor one who is too proud."⁵⁸ Al-Khateeb al-Baghdaadee said in his book, Al-Faqeeh wal-Mutafaqqih (2/143), "And it is befitting that shyness should not prevent a person from asking questions about something that has happened to him. But if he does become too shy and embarrassed to ask a question to the scholar, then he should give his question to one he feels at home with or one he feels relaxed with for him to ask the scholar on his behalf and to inform him about its ruling."

So in summary, whoever wishes to reach the levels of the scholars let him begin by asking questions. How fine is the saying Allaah has caused the scholar Ibn al'Arabee⁵⁹ to say, "How close the things are to being attained when they are given their due worth, and how far from attainment when they are not given their due worth. So ask the scholar you will be a scholar like him."

Whoever attains wide knowledge must spend the dowry for that. So carefully consider the knowledge which you give a ruling with, there is no good in knowledge without careful consideration. For a person may strive and still be falling short, and the efforts of a person may be frustrated, even, though he doesn't fall short. The men whose actions we take as an example have gone and those men who censure every evil action also. I am left within the later people who seek to adorn one another to hide each others short-comings."

Know that asking questions in a good manner will help the scholar to give the answer, as Maymoon ibn Mihraan said, "Asking questions in a good manner is half of knowledge."⁶⁰ Therefore it is

⁵⁷ Saheeh, as I have explained in my abridgement of Miftaah Daaris-Sa'aadah, (p. 174).

⁵⁸ Reported by ad-Daarimee (1/138), al-Bayhaqee in his Madkhal ilas-Sunan (no. 410) and al-Khateeb al-Baghdaadee in Al-Faqeeh wal-Mutafaqqih, (2/ 144).

⁵⁹ i.e., Aboo Bakr Muhammad ibn 'Abdullaah al-Maalikee (d. 543H).

⁶⁰ Reported by al-Khateeb al-Baghdaadee in Al-Jaami' li-Akhlaaqir-Raawee wa Aadaabaais Saami', (1/213).

essential to explain the knowledge of how to ask questions, because being ignorant of that will lead to confusion. Maalik ibn Anas said, "Ibn 'Ajlaan came to Zayd ibn Aslam to ask him about something but he became confused in it, so Zayd said to him, 'Go away and learn how to ask questions and then come and ask.'"⁶¹

(i) **The question should be a question to find something out, it should not be asked to cause trouble, nor should it be to show someone's ignorance, and it should not be made as a test for someone.** Because this is the condition mentioned in the Book of Allaah:

Ask the people of the Reminder, if you do not know. Soorah an-Nahl (16):43 and Soorah al-Anbiyaa (21):7.

So one who does not know then he asks in order that he may be taught. However, it is permissible for one who knows that he asks the scholar in order to teach those people who are sitting round about. Because this is what Jibreel (alaihis-salaam) did with Allaah's Messenger (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam), his questions were asked in order to teach the Companions (radiyallaahu 'anhum) who were sitting around the Prophet.

(ii) **It is not allowed to ask questions about something which there is no need of, things whose answers will trouble the one who is asking the question.** Anas (radiyallaahu 'anhu) said, "Allaah's Messenger (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) gave a khutbah and I have never heard the like of it. He (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) said, 'If you knew what I know, then you would certainly laugh only a little, and you would weep a lot.'" So the Companions (radiyallaahu 'anhum) covered up their faces and they were weeping, so a man said, 'Who is my father?' He said, 'Your father is so and so.' So this aayah was sent down:

Do not ask about things, which, if they are made plain to you may cause trouble to you.⁶²

(iii) **Likewise, it is not allowed to ask questions about things which may cause difficulty and cause hardship to the questioner or for other Muslims.** Sa'd (radiyallaahu 'anhu) said that the Prophet (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) said, "The severest of the Muslims in sin with regard to the Muslims is one who asks about something that was not forbidden but it is made forbidden due to his asking the question."⁶³

(iv) **Therefore the Companions (radiyallaahu 'anhum) and the Taabi'een used to hate asking questions about things before they happened and they would not answer those questions.** Since this is going to excess which is something Allaah has forbidden and He has declared His Prophet free from it. He ordered His Prophet to say:

Say, 'I do not ask you for any reward for it and I am not one of the ones who goes beyond bounds.' Soorah Saad (38):86.

Ar-Rabee' ibn Khuthaim said, "O servant of Allaah, whatever knowledge Allaah has given to you in His Book, then give praise and give thanks to Allaah for that. Whatever knowledge He has kept concealed from you, then leave it to the One who knows it and don't go to excesses, because Allaah, the Mighty and Majestic said to His Prophet (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam):

I do not ask you for any reward for it and I am not one of the ones who goes to excesses. It is just a reminder for all of men and jinn. And you will certainly know the news of its truth after a short while (after death and the Resurrection). Soorah Saad (38):86-88.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Soorah al-Maa'idah (5):101. Reported by al-Bukhaaree, (Eng. trans. vol. 6, nos. 145 and 146) and Muslim, (no. 2359).

⁶³ Reported by al-Bukhaaree, (Eng. trans. vol. 9, nos. 392) and Muslim, (no. 2358).

Ibn 'Abdul-Barr said in his book, *Jaami' Bayaanil-'Ilm wa Fadlih,i* (2/138~139) "A group of the people of knowledge said, 'The opinion (Ra'y) that is blameworthy, criticised, abandoned and which it is not allowed to look into, nor to occupy oneself with, is innovated opinion and its like from the innovated types.'

But others say, and they are the majority of the people of knowledge, 'Blameworthy opinion that is mentioned in these narrations by the Prophet (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) and from the Companions and the Taabi'een is speaking about the rulings of the sharee'ah based upon personal opinion of what is good, and based upon surmise, preoccupying oneself with intricate and difficult matters, and with thorny questions, referring details of happenings to each other and making analogy based upon that without referring them back to their origins and looking at their causes and taking that into consideration. Applying one's opinion before things actually occur and then laying down details to follow on from this and resultant side issues before anything happens and speaking about this before these things occur. This is like pure speculation. They say: so preoccupying oneself and delving into these things is an abandonment of what occurs in the Sunnah. It involves looking into things which the Sunnah is silent about, and it means abandonment of occupying oneself with that which is essential from the Sunnah and the Book of Allaah, the Mighty and Majestic, and its meanings." I say: and even if the excuse given for this hair-splitting, this laying down of details, this giving hypothetical answers, was that it is used just to train oneself upon the matters of fiqh, then it is still the same as is pointed out by Haafiz ibn Hajr al-Asqalaanee (may Allaah have mercy on him) in his book, *Fath al-Baaree*.⁶⁴

(v) **Al-Khateeb al-Baghdaadee (may Allaah have mercy on him) in his book, *Jaami' li-Akhlaaqir-Raawee wa Adaabis-Saami'*, (1/211~214) brings a number of chapters in this regard and we will mention the most important of these headings due to their importance:**

From correct manners is that when the scholar of hadeeth narrates a hadeeth and then something appears to the student while he is narrating and he wants to ask about that thing, he should not ask about it at that time. Rather he should have patience until the narrator has finished narrating his hadeeth and then he can ask about whatever he wants to ask about.

He should avoid asking the narrator of hadeeth when his heart is preoccupied. It is not befitting that he should ask him when he is standing up, nor when he is walking, because there is a saying appropriate to each place, and there are places appropriate for the narrating of Hadeeth-and they exclude the streets and lowly places.

It is obligatory that the questioner should mention to the scholar of hadeeth those chains of the hadeeth which he wants to hear narrated from him, and if a hadeeth has many chains the questioner should specify the best of them and should specify the points of benefit he wishes to hear narrated by him. If the scholar of hadeeth responds and grants his request to narrate to him, then the student should be easy upon him and he should not trouble him.

(vi) **It is permissible to ask a scholar about his proof.** Al-Khateeb al-Baghdaadee said in his book, *Al-Faqeeh wal-Mutafaqqih*, (2/149), "And if the scholar gives him an answer to his question it is permissible for him to ask him about his answer, did he say it based upon a narration or did he say it based upon opinion."

(vii) **It is hated to keep repeating a question to the scholar in a troublesome manner.** Al-Khateeb al-Baghdaadee said in his book, *Al-Faqeeh wal-Mutafaqqih*, (2/149), "And if he asks the scholar to explain and he explains it to him and then he repeats again and asks him to explain again, it is allowed for the scholar to add more. If he asks him again after that then it is allowed for the scholar to hold his tongue because frequent repetition will vex him. However it is recommendable for the scholar to be mild and treat with tolerance and make allowance for the people."

⁶⁴ Vol. 8, p.282.

(viii) **It is allowed for him to ask about speech that is unclear to him.** 'Abdullaah ibn Mas'ood (radiyallaahu 'anhu) said, "I prayed along with Allaah's Messenger (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) one night and he stood for a very long time until I thought about doing something bad." A student said to him, "What did you think of doing?" He said, "I thought of sitting down and leaving him."⁶⁵

⁶⁵ Reported by al-Bukhaaree, (Eng. trans. vol. 2, no. 236) and Muslim, (no. 773).

Chapter Seven

THE SAYING `I DO NOT KNOW' IS HALF OF KNOWLEDGE

The saying of Allaah's Messenger (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam), "**The one who is asked the question does not know better than the one who is asking,**" which he said when Jibreel (alaihis-salaam) asked him about the Last Hour, is a proof that when a scholar is asked about anything which he does not know, it is befitting that he should say, `I do not know.' Likewise the saying of 'Umar (radiyallaahu 'anhu) at the end of the hadeeth, "**Allaah and His Messenger know best,**" which he said when Allaah's Messenger (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) asked him, "**O 'Umar, do you know the one who was asking the questions?**"

Whoever shows humility then his wisdom will be raised

So this saying does not reduce the value of the scholar at all, rather it is from his piety and from his Religion to do so. Because above every possessor of knowledge there is one who knows more and the One who knows all. So let the one who takes this stand, remember and keep in mind that this saying is a part of the completion and perfection of his Religion. Because even the Angels who are drawn close did not feel shy from this part of the clear truth, when the Lord of all creation said to them:

"(Inform Me of the names of these things if you are truthful)." The Angels replied, `How Perfect and free from imperfections You are! We have no knowledge except that which You have taught to us. Indeed, You are the All-Knowing and the All-Wise." Soorah al-Baqarah (2):32.

And ash-Sha'bee (may Allaah have mercy on him), when he was asked a question about something said, "I do not know." So it was said to him, "Don't you feel shy to say I don't know and you are the scholar of the people of `Iraaq?" So he said, "But the Angels didn't feel shy when they said, `**How Perfect You are Our Lord, we have no knowledge except that which You have taught us.**'"⁶⁶ And one who knows his own level, should carefully consider the saying of Allaah, The Most High to His Messenger (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam)

Say, `I do not ask you for any reward for this and I am not one to invent and add extra things."⁶⁷ Soorah Saad (38):86.

'Abdullaah ibn Mas'ood (radiyallaahu 'anhu) said, "Whoever has some knowledge then let him speak, and whoever does not have knowledge with him, then let him say, `Allaah knows best.' Because Allaah said to His Prophet:

Say, `I do not ask you for any reward for this and I am not one to invent and add extra things."

⁶⁶ Reported by Ibn 'Abdul-Barr in Jaami' Bayaanil-'Ilm, (2/51) and al-Khateeb al-Baghdaadee in Al-Faqeeh wal-Mutafaqqih, (2/174).

⁶⁷ Reported by ad-Daarimee, (1/62), Ibn 'Abdul-Barr in Jaami' Bayaanil-Ilm (2/51), al-Bayhaqee in Madkhal ilas-Sunan, (no. 797) and al-Khateeb al-Baghdaadee in Al-Faqeeh wal-Mutafaqqih, (2/171) by way of different chains from al-A'mash, ad-Duhaa and Masrooq with it. I say: It is saheeh.

This was the manner of the Pious Predecessors

It is found in numerous reports that pleasing behavior, pure manners, this character which is the character of a person upon the Sunnah-all this is found to be from the manners of the Salafus-Saalih: the Companions, the Taabi'een and those who followed them upon their good until the Day of Resurrection.

Aboo Bakr as-Siddeeq (radiyallaahu 'anhu) was asked a question about an aayah from the Book of Allaah and he said in reply, "Which earth will support me? Which sky will shade me? Where can I go? What will I be able to do? If I say about an aayah from the Book of Allaah other than what Allaah, the Perfect and Most High, intended."⁶⁸ The same saying is related from 'Aloe ibn Abee Taalib (radiyallaahu 'anhu).⁶⁹

It is also reported from him that he was asked about a matter so he said, "I have no knowledge about it." Then he said, "How pleasing this is for the liver, how pleasing this is for the liver, how pleasing this is for the liver." So the people said, "O Chief of the Believers! And what is that thing?" He said, "That thing is that a man is asked about something which he does not know, and he says, 'Allaah knows best.'"⁷⁰

Ibn 'Umar was asked a question, "Does the paternal aunt inherit?" He replied, "I don't know." So the one who was asking the question said, "You-you don't know and we don't know?!" So he said, "Yes. Go to the people of knowledge in al-Madeenah and ask them." Then when the man left, Ibn 'Umar kissed his own hands and said, "How finely Aboo 'Abdur-Rahmaan has spoken. He was asked about something which he did not know, and he said, 'I don't know.'"⁷¹

This was the way of the Companions (radiyallaahu 'anhum). Each one of them would have loved that somebody else besides him sufficed him and gave an answer in his place.

Al-Baraa `ibn 'Aazib (radiyallaahu 'anhu) said, "I have seen three hundred from the people of Badr, and there was not one of them except that he loved that his companion would give a reply to questions on his behalf."⁷²

Then the Taabi'een reached and inherited this practice. 'Abdur-Rahmaan ibn Abee Laylaa said, "I met one hundred and twenty from the Ansaar from the Companions of Allaah's Messenger (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam). One of them would be asked a question and he would give it to somebody else-until it would come back to the one who had been asked in the first place."⁷³ Al-Qaasim ibn Muhammad was asked a question so he said, "I do not know." Then he said, "By Allaah, that a man should live in ignorance after having known the right of Allaah upon him is better than that he should say something which he does not know."⁷⁴

This same behaviour influenced the successors of the Taabi'een (radiyallaahu 'anhu) and one of the most successful of them upon that was the Imaam of the place of Hijrah, Imaam Maalik (may Allaah have mercy on him). So it is reported from Ibn Wahb who said, "I heard Maalik and the saying of al-Qaasim, 'That a man should live in ignorance is better for him than that he should speak about Allaah that which he does not know,' was quoted to him. So Maalik said, "This is speech which is to

⁶⁸ Reported by Ibn 'Abdul-Barr in Jaami' Bayaanil-Ilm (2/52) and al-Bayhaqee in Madkhal ilas-Sunan, (no. 792). It is also established from him through a number of chains of narration. Ibn 'Abdul-Barr said, "The like of it is reported from Aboo Bakr, Maymoon ibn Mihraan, 'Aamir ash-Sha'bee and Ibn Abee Mulaykah."

⁶⁹ Jaami' Bayaanil-'Ilm wa Fadlihi, (2/52).

⁷⁰ Reported by ad-Daarimee, (1/62463), al-Khateeb al-Baghdaadee in Al-Faqeeh wal-Mutafaqqih, (2/171) and al-Bayhaqee in Madkhal ilas-Sunan, (no. 794). through various chains of narration from him.

⁷¹ Reported by ad-Daarimee, (1/63), Ibn 'Abdul-Barr in Jaami' Bayaanil-Ilm wa Fadlihi (2/52), al-Khateeb in Al-Faqeeh wal-Mutafaqqih, (2/171~172) and al-Bayhaqee in Madkhal ilas-Sunan, (no. 796).

⁷² Al-Faqeeh wal-Mutafaqqih, (2/165).

⁷³ Reported by ad-Daarimee, (1/53), Ibn Sa'ad in At-Tabaqat (6/110) and others. I say: Its chain of narration is authentic.

⁷⁴ Reported by ad-Daarimee (1/48), Aboo Khaythamah in Al-'Ilm (no.90), Ibn 'Abdul-Barr in Jaami Bayaanil-'Ilm (2/53), al-Fasawee in Al-Ma'rifah wat-Taareekh (1/546 & 547) and al-Khateeb in Al-Faqeeh wal-Mutafaqqih (2/173).

be accepted." Then Maalik mentioned Aboo Bakr as-Siddeeq (radiyallaahu 'anhu), and he mentioned the excellence that Allaah particularized Aboo Bakr with, then Maalik said, "But Aboo Bakr (radiyallaahu 'anhu) said in that time, 'I do not know.' Then why should I not say, 'I do not know.'"⁷⁵

'Ahdur-Rahmaan ibn Mahdee said, "A man came to Maalik ibn Anas to ask him a question about something. For a number of days he would not give him any answer, so then he said, 'O Aboo 'Abdullaah! I want to leave now and I have repeatedly come to you.' So he held his head down for a long time ... then he raised it up, and said, 'It is just as Allaah has willed. O person! I only speak about that which I hold to be good, and I am not able to answer this question of yours.'"⁷⁶ Ibn Wahb said, "And I used to hear him frequently say, 'I do not know.' If we were to write down how often he said, 'I do not know,' we would have filled many sheets."⁷⁷

This practice, this behaviour and this rightly-guided way became the practice of the wise scholars such as ash-Sha'bee, Ibraaheem an-Nakha'ee, Sa'eed ibn Jubayr, Muhammad ibn 'Ajlaan, 'Abdullaah ibn Zayd, Ibn Hurmuz, Ayyoob as-Sakhtiyaanee, 'Amr ibn Deenaar and others (may Allaah have mercy on him). To such an extent that it would be difficult in a place like this to mention all their names, to the point that the composer of the poem said:

So if you don't know that which you are asked about,
And you do not have knowledge about it,
Then do not speak about it without understanding,
Because error is something that bites at the people of knowledge;
And if you are rendered unable by an affair, then say,
'I have no report about that which you ask me.'
So this with the scholars is half of knowledge,
This is what the wise people have always said and continue to say.

Some matters that will assist in this regard

In attainment of this affair, they were helped by certain matters:

(i) **The fact that they used to flee away from giving rulings and they had not used to hurry to give rulings. One of them used to have an overwhelming desire that his brother would be able to help out and answer the question in his place.** This has preceded in the report from al-Baraa ibn 'Aazib (radiyallaahu 'anhu) and the other report from 'Abdur Rahmaan ibn Abee Laylaa.

(ii) **They would not give religious rulings about those things they were able to leave off giving a ruling about, matters for which there was no text, for fear of falling into sin. Because whoever gives a Religious ruling without certainty of it and without knowledge, then the sin of it will fall upon the one who gave that verdict.** 'Uqbah ibn Muslim said, "I accompanied Ibn 'Umar for thirty months and very often he would be asked a question and he would say, 'I don't know.' Then he would turn aside and say, 'Do you know what these people want? They want to mike our backs a bridge leading to Hellfire.'"⁷⁸

(iii) **The desire of each of them would be just to be saved with Allaah.** Maalik ibn Anas (may Allaah have mercy on him) said, "Rabee'ah narrated to me saying, 'Ibn Khaldah said, 'O Rabee'ah! I see that you give verdicts to the people. So if a man comes to you, asking you about something, then don't let your desire be to extract him from that which he has fallen into, but let your desire be to free yourself from that which he is asking you about.'"⁷⁹

⁷⁵ Reported by al-Fasawee in Al-Ma'rifah wat-Taareekh, (1/546) and al-Bayhaqee in Madkhal ilas-Sunan, (no. 808).

⁷⁶ Reported by Abu Nu'aym in Al-Hilyah, (6/323) and others.

⁷⁷ Jaami' Bayaanil'Ilm, (2/54).

⁷⁸ Reported in Jaami' Bayaanil'Ilm wa-Fadlihi, (2/54).

⁷⁹ Reported by al-Fasawee in Al-Ma'rifah wat-Tareekh, (1/556) and al-Khateeb al-Baghdaadee in Al-Faqeeh wal-Mutafaqqih (2/169).

iv) **The fact that whoever abandons saying, 'I do not know,' then he has been mortally wounded.** Ibn 'Abbaas (radiyallaahu 'anhu) said, "When a scholar leaves aside the saying, 'I do not know,' then he has been mortally wounded."⁸⁰

(v) **They learned that the saying, 'I do not know,' is half of knowledge.** Ash-Sha'bee said, 'I do not know,' is half of knowledge."⁸¹ The same wording is reported from Abud-Dardaa.⁸²

Likewise whoever seeks knowledge of that which he does not know then it will reach him, and whoever claims to have knowledge of that which he does not really know then the examination will reveal his true value, "and whoever claims that which he does not have, then the witnesses of the examination will prove him a liar, and he will run in knowledge like the last horse in a race, the one left behind by the fast horses on the day of the wager."

Abudh-Dhayaan therefore said, "Learn the saying, 'I do not know,' and do not learn the saying, 'I know.' Because if you say, 'I do not know,' then they will teach you until you do know, but if you keep saying 'I do know,' then they will ask you until you do not know."⁸³ Whoever does this is rightly guided and upon the way of salvation, as Maalik ibn Anas (may Allaah have mercy on him) said, "It is fitting that the scholar becomes accustomed with regard to matters which are a problem for him that he says, 'I do not know.' And then hopefully good will be made ready for him."⁸⁴

This is what they used to teach their students

Since the affair of the Salafus-Saalih (may Allaah have mercy on them) was firmly settled upon that, this noble quality became a manner which the teacher would teach to his students and train them upon. Maalik ibn Anas (may Allaah have mercy on him) heard 'Abdullaah ibn Yazeed ibn Hurmuz say, "It is fitting that the scholar narrates to those who sit with him the saying, 'I do not know.' Until that becomes a fundamental principle for them, in front of them, which they can flee to when one of them is asked about something which he doesn't know; so that he will be able to say, 'I do not know.'"

In conclusion, whoever thinks that he has no need of learning ... then he is at the edge of a cliff which has a very long drop.

⁸⁰ Reported by Ibn 'Abdul-Barr in Jaami' Bayaanil-'Ilm wa-Fadlihi (2/54), al-Khateeb in Al-Faqeeh wal-Mutafaqqih (2/172), al-Bayhaqee in Madkhal ilas-Sunan, (no.813) by way of Maalik, from Ibn 'Ajlaan, from him with it. I say: Its chain of narration is hasan.

⁸¹ Reported by ad-Daarimee (1/63), al-Khateeb in Al-Faqeeh wal-Mutafaqqih (2/173) and al-Bayhaqee in Madkhal ilas-Sunan, (no.810). Through chains of narration from Aboo 'Awaanah, from al-Mugheerah, from him with it. I say: And it is authentic.

⁸² Jaami' Bayaanil-'Ilm wa Fadlihi (2/54).

⁸³ Ibid., (2/55).

⁸⁴ Mentioned by Ibn 'Abdul-Barr in Jaami' Bayaanil-'Ilm wa Fadlihi (2/53~54), quoting from Ibn Wahb in his book Al-Majaalis, and it is reported by al-Bayhaqee in Al-Madhkhal ilas-Sunan (no. 808) by way of Ibn Wahb.

Chapter Eight

ADVICE FOR THE CARE OF THE STUDENTS OF KNOWLEDGE

The saying of the Prophet (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam), "**O 'Umar, do you know the one who asked the questions?**" contains the manner of the scholar's drawing the attention of his students and of elders besides them to beneficial points of knowledge, and to striking points of things that happen, in order to benefit them and to keep them alert.⁸⁵

Small plants in the Gardens of the Scholars

The students are like small plants that grow up in the gardens of the scholars. It is befitting that the people of knowledge be concerned and have good intentions for their students, that they look towards the students with an eye of love, that they surround them with their desire for good for them, and surround them with care for them, so that they grow in an upright manner and do not become crooked.

The instruction to take care of the Students of Knowledge given by Allaah's Messenger (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam)

Allaah's Messenger (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) gave counsel for the students of knowledge to be treated well. Aboo Sa'eed al-Khudree said, "Welcome to the admonition given by Allaah's Messenger (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam). Allaah's Messenger (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) used to counsel us concerning you (meaning the students of knowledge)."⁸⁶

The Companions were likewise

The Companions (radiyallaahu 'anhum) used to apply this admonition that was given to them. Al-Kumail ibn Ziyaad said, "'Alee ibn Abee Taalib took hold of my hand and took me out towards some flat open ground. When we reached the desert area, he sat down, took a breath and then said, "O Kumayl ibn Ziyaad! The hearts are vessels, so the best of them are the most receptive of them. Preserve what I am going to say to you.'" And he mentioned a lengthy advice.⁸⁷

So consider how the Chief of the Believers gave the advice to his student, al-Kumayl ibn Ziyaad an-Nakha'ee. The fact that he spoke pleasantly with him, face to face, took hold of his hand and then took him along to a place suitable for admonition, to open ground. This 'open ground (jabbaan),' could be just an open desert area; a place where a person can be alone, able to consider, to think and reflect. Because the heart becomes free when one goes to such a place.

Indeed Allah's Messenger (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) was caused to love seclusion at the start of Revelation. It is reported from 'Aa'ishah (radiyallaahu 'anha), the Mother of the Believers, that she said, "The start of the Revelation to Allaah's Messenger (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) were the true dreams. So he had not used to see any dream except that it occurred just as clearly as the dawn breaks. Then solitude was made beloved to him, so he used to go off alone to the Cave of Hira and he would worship in it for a number of nights."⁸⁸

⁸⁵ Daleelul-Faalihaan of Ibn Alaan, (1/278).

⁸⁶ Reported by al-Haakim (1/88), al-'Alaa'ee in Bughyatul Multamis, (p.28) and ar-Raamahurmuzee in Al-Muhaddithul-Faadil, (no. 21). It was declared saheeh by our Shaykh (may Allah protect him) in As-Saheehah, (no. 280).

⁸⁷ And refer necessarily to my book, Al-Is'aad Bidhikr Fawaa'id Wasiyyah Ameeril-Mu'mineen 'Alee ibn Abee Taalib lil-Kumayl ibn Ziyaad. [Trans. note: The English reader may refer to the forthcoming book Min Wasaayas -Salaf compiled by Shaikh Saleem as it includes this advice in full., Salafi Publications, Birmingham, UK]

⁸⁸ Reported by al-Bukhaaree, (Eng. trans. vol. 1, no. 3).

Or the 'open ground' which 'Alee took his student to was a graveyard.⁸⁹ Since that is a place where one is reminded of the Hereafter. So whichever of these places it was, then he alerted him to the importance of what he was going to relate to him, and he commanded him to comprehend and preserve it.

So this is the prophetic methodology in teaching, just the way in which Allaah's Messenger (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) used to teach, and did so with 'Abdullaah ibn 'Abbaas (may Allaah be pleased with them both), when he said to him, "O young man, I am going to teach you some words ..." the hadeeth.⁹⁰

Some Pearls from the Sayings of the People of Knowledge

Al-Khateeb al-Baghdaadee said in his book, *Al-Jaami' li-Akhlaaqir-Raawee wa Aadaabis-Saami'*, (1/343/355),

"Chapter: *The narrator of hadeeth should show respect to the students of knowledge and should tolerate the students in a good manner and he should be mild with them.*" He mentioned a number of headings in this chapter, and we shall mention the most important of them.

- That he should give respect to the elders and the people with understanding.
- He should honour the nobles of the people and those with lineage.
- He should honour whoever is the head amongst his people and is influential amongst his people.
- He should give respect to those people who come from a different place and draw them close and that he should receive and welcome them.
- He should have modesty and humility towards the students.
- He should treat them with good manners.
- He should be gentle with those who have a rough and coarse character.

And from the pearls of his words in another of his books, *Al-Faqeeh wal-Mutafaqqih*, (2/110) is his saying under the heading, 'A mention of the manners of the scholar and the manners that are essential for him and which he must apply with regard to his students and companions. He should choose from the traits those which are the finest; and take from manners the most excellent of them. So he should apply these manners and characteristics with those who are far and those that are close to him. He should apply this with the foreigner and those that have lineage. And he should avoid the ways of the ignorant people, he should avoid the manners of the common folk and the lowly folk."

And he said under the heading (2/113): *Applying modesty, humility, mildness and gentle speech:*

"And it is befitting that he should accustom his tongue to being mild in his speech, being gentle in questioning and answering. This should be applied generally to the whole of the ummah of the Muslims and to the people of the Dhimmah."

And he said (2/116~120) under the heading: *The scholars accepting and welcoming students and showing them that he is pleased to receive them:*

⁸⁹ [Trans. note: Because in Arabic the word 'jabbaan' can refer to either a desert or a graveyard].

⁹⁰ Authentic, as I have explained in *Saheeh Kitaabil-Adhkaar wa da'eefihi*, (no. 1218/1000).

"And the scholar should serve his companions himself in such a way as will cause them to have affection and cause their hearts to have love for him." And he said, "It is befitting that he notices and has concern for the absence of his students when they are absent, and asks about those who are absent."

And he said (2/139) under the heading: *The attention the scholars should give to the different levels of his students.*

"It is recommended that the scholar should be aware of the different levels of his students in their knowledge, and should keep in mind their excellence. He should make clear their standing so that the people can refer to them when anything happens to him, and can take knowledge from them."

And he said (2/140), "**And if it becomes clear to the scholar that one of his companions is outstanding in his knowledge and in his good understanding of *fiqh*** then it is permissible for him to particularise him and to give him preference over the others."

Some fine points and some important landmarks

This covers the following fine points:

(i) **The fact that the chain of narration is something that continues.** Al-Alaa'ee said in his book, *Bughyatul-Multamiss* on page 23, "To proceed. Then Allaah, the Exalted and Most High, and all praise is for Him and all favours are from Him, has favoured this noble ummah with the connected chain of narration. It is through this that the later ones of this ummah have reported from the earlier ones, the Sunnah of their Prophet (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) and the explanation of what he was upon.

This is one of his miracles that he indicated and he promised his ummah that this is something that will be preserved, and he gave counsel with regard to the students of knowledge that they were to be treated kindly, that they should be helped to attain their aim and that they should be aided. The Prophet (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) said, **'You will hear, and people will hear from you, and from those who heard from you others will hear from them.'**⁹¹

(ii) **An Encouragement for travelling to seek knowledge.** Since it is reported in some of the preceding reports of Aboo Sa'eed al-Khudree, that the Prophet (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) said, **"There will come to you a people who seek knowledge, so when you see them then say, 'Welcome, welcome to the admonition given by Allaah's Messenger (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam),' and satisfy them.'**⁹² I said to al-Hakam (one of the sub-narrators) what does **'... satisfy them ...'** mean? He said **'Teach them.'**

And in his book, *Ar-Rihlah fee talabil hadeeth (Journeying to Seek Hadeeth)*, al-Khateeb al-Baghdaadee quoted many excellent points in this regard. It is famous from the people of knowledge how they had humility, how they had eagerness to convey knowledge to their students, those who hastened towards them from the different parts of the earth to drink from their pure streams.

(iii) **The scholar should devote himself to the students of knowledge.** And there were scholars who accepted students with generosity and with generous manners. They accepted those students of knowledge who came to them and benefited from them and this is something indicated by the saying of Allaah, the Most High, to His Prophet (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam):

⁹¹ Reported by Aboo Daawood (no. 3695), Ahmad (1/321), Ibn Hibbaan (no. 77, Mawaarid), al-Haakim (1/95) by way of 'Abdullaah ibn 'Abdullaah ibn Sa'eed ibn Jubayr: from Ibn 'Abbaas, from the Prophet (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam). Al-Haakim declared it saheeh to the standard of the two shaykhs. I say: The two shaykhs do not quote any narrations from 'Abdullaah ibn 'Abdullaah, but he is reliable (thiqah).

⁹² Refer to Saheeh Sunan Ibn Maajah, (no. 201).

And by the Mercy of Allaah you were gentle with them. And if you had been severe and harsh hearted they would have broken away and left you. So pass over their short-comings and seek forgiveness for them and consult them in the affairs.' Soorah Aali-Imraan (3):159.

So since it is the case that the Lord of all the creation advised His Messenger (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) to treat his companions in a good manner, then indeed the students of knowledge are in great need of the shelter of a merciful scholar, and in need of the best care, of kindness, friendliness and love to encompass them and mildness. A scholar who does not distress them and harm them when they suffer from ignorance, weakness and deficiencies.

They are in need of a large heart that will give to them and does not need that they should give to him. One who will carry their worries and not bother them with his concerns, (one) who is such that they find that he takes care of them and has sympathy with them.

So because of this a person will hardly hear a part of all of this advice for the benefit of the students of knowledge and see the great care and attention that is to be given to the students of knowledge, except that it makes him want to leap forward and to be a part of this sublime life of knowledge that will produce fruits, as Allaah wills, beginning from its great beginning that lies with the people of Hadeeth, those upon the way of the Pious Predecessors, in order that the glory this ummah has lost should be returned to it and that the hope that it has be realised. We ask Allaah that He grant us that we see that memorable day.

Chapter Nine

CHOOSING THE SHAIKHS AND SCHOLARS WITH WHOM YOU SHOULD LEARN

In the saying of Allaah's Messenger (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) to 'Umar Ibn al-Khattaab (radiyallaahu 'anhu), **"This was Jibreel, he came to teach you your Religion,"** is an indication for the student of knowledge to turn his face toward the people of knowledge, the wise and learned scholars those whose fame for having taqwaa is widespread, whose reliability is established, those whose uprightness upon the Religion is known.

This Knowledge is your Religion

The Pious Predecessors have indicated this point that is such that it rescues from ignorance and protects those who follow and apply it from misguidance. The noble taabi'ee Muhammad Ibn Seereen said, "Indeed this knowledge is the Religion so look and see from whom you are taking your religion."⁹³

This is because the knowledge is carried by the trustworthy ones. So it is right and proper that this is whom it is taken from. Just as Aboo Moosaa 'Eesaa ibn Sabeeh said, "It is authentic from the Prophet (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) that he said, 'This knowledge will be carried in every generation by the trustworthy ones, those who will repel from it the changes of those going beyond bounds, the misinterpretations of the ignorant, and the false claims of the liars.'"⁹⁴ So the correct way of knowledge is that it should be taken from those who have this as their way and their description."⁹⁵

Therefore it is befitting that you distinguish between the scholars of the people of *Sunnah* and those of the people of *bid'ah* (innovation) just as Muhammad Ibn Seereen (may Allaah have mercy on him) said, "They had not used to ask about the chain of narration but when the fitnah⁹⁶ occurred they said, 'Name your men to us.' So as for the people of the *Sunnah* then their narrations would be accepted, and as for the people of innovation, their narrations would not be accepted."⁹⁷

Likewise it is befitting that one distinguishes the people of understanding and accepts from them, because every knowledge has its people who are known with it and known through it. Maalik Ibn Anas (may Allaah have mercy on him) said, "This knowledge is Religion so look to see from whom you take your Religion. I met seventy people who would say, 'So and so said Allaah's Messenger (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) said that ...' (i.e., men from the Taabi'een) at the pillars of the mosque, and he indicated that the mosque of the Prophet (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) but I didn't take anything from them. But if one of them were given some wealth he would have proved trustworthy. Because they were not from the people of this affair; and when Muhammad ibn Muslim Ibn 'Ubaydullaah ibn 'Abdullaah Ibn Shihaab (az-Zuhree) comes, the people crowd around his door."⁹⁸

⁹³ From the introduction of Muslim to his Saheeh, with an authentic chain of narration.

⁹⁴ Hasan due to its supports as I have shown in a separate treatise.

⁹⁵ Al-Jaami' li Akhlaaqir-Raawee wa Aadaabis-Saami', (1/129).

⁹⁶ i.e., the fitnah of the liar, al-Mukhtaar ibn 'Ubayd ath-Thaqafee who claimed revelation and offered large sums of money for the people to fabricate ahadeeth. His appearance was foretold by the Prophet (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) in his saying, **"There will come amongst Thaqeef a great liar and a great murderer."** Reported by Muslim (Eng. trans. vol. 4, p. 1351, no. 6176). He perished in 67 H [Trans. note].

⁹⁷ Reported by Muslim in the introduction to his 'saheeh' (1/15) with an authentic chain of narration.

⁹⁸ Al-Faqeeh wal-Mutafaqqih, (2/98)

Some Pearls from the Sayings of the People of Knowledge

This point has been indicated by the people of knowledge in their works in order to protect and to prepare for the future so that this knowledge would not fall into the arms of the false claimants, "Those people whose tree sprouted in a barren land, those who compete for prominence before they have matured, those who turn into raisins before they have become grapes, those who throw themselves upon the station of knowledge to give verdicts and to author works, and those who intrude upon the pinnacle belonging to the trustworthy predecessors of this ummah. So these people settle themselves in the courtyards belonging to knowledge, and are only intent upon demolishing its sanctity and tearing down its protective fence."

And the boldness of these people has only been increased by the common folk and their likes attending their circles in amazement listening to their stories with delight. Al-Khateeb al-Baghdaadee said in, *Al-Faqeeh wal Mutafaqqih* (2/96), "It is befitting for the student that he should turn his attention to those scholars who are famous for their practise of the Religion. Those who are known for their good and for their repute upon good in the Religion." Then he said, "He should be such that he is characterised by patience, mildness, modesty, and being kind, mild and tolerant with his companions, but who speaks the truth and gives sincere advice to the creation, and the rest of the praiseworthy attributes and beautiful characteristics."

And in his excellent book, *AL-Jaami' li Akhlaaqir-Raawee* (1/126~137) he placed a number of chapters which we shall mention:

- The levels of narrators are not equal in their knowledge, so precedence should be given to those who have a higher chain of narration. If the scholars have chains of the same length and the student only wants to hear from some of them, he should pick the most famous of them for having sought hadeeth, those who are pointed out for their precision and understanding.
- And if they are the same in their chains of narration and their understanding, then he should choose those who are noble and have lineage - they have greater right.
- All of this refers to those who have the precondition of being known to be straight and upright in their Religion, (those) for whom it is established that they are trustworthy and free from innovations. As for one who is not of this description, then you must turn away from him and not hear from him.
- The scholars are agreed that hearing narration's from one about whom it is established that he is a sinner, then it is not allowed to hear from him, and flagrant sin (fisq) will be established by many affairs not particular to the field of hadeeth. As for those particular to hadeeth, then from them for example is that he fabricates texts of hadeeth and attributes them to Allaah's Messenger (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) or fabricates their chains of narration. It is said that the very start of the investigation of hadeeth was due to this reason. Also from these reasons is that a person claims to hear from one whom he never met, this is why the scholars carefully reported the dates narrators were born and died. In this way narrations were found for scholars from those they were too young to have met. They also carefully recorded the attributes of scholars of hadeeth and their appearance and circumstances and through this a number of narrators were uncovered.
- Regarding other narrators, then even though they were free of having fabricated narrations, and from claiming to have heard from those they did not meet, and avoided those characteristics that destroy trustworthiness, yet they did not possess written copies of the narrations they heard and so they had to narrate from memory alone. Then it is not correct to depend upon their narrations until well-grounded people of knowledge of narrations bear

witness in their favour-that they are from those who did indeed seek knowledge, take care of it, were precise about it and carefully memorised it. Then his precision and care is checked by mixing up narrations as a test for him.

- If the narrator of hadeeth is from the people of innovated sects and ways that conflict with the truth, then narration's are not to be taken from him even if he has studied and memorised.

Beware of wasting or losing the knowledge

It is befitting for the students of the sharee'ah knowledge that they should be aware of the true reality of the affair, to be aware from whom they are taking their Religion. They should not seek it from the people of Innovation who will mislead them while they do not realise, because he (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) said, **"From the signs of the Last Hour is that knowledge will be sought from 'the small ones.**"⁹⁹

O Students of Knowledge! Awaken! Because this knowledge is Religion and be aware of whom you take your Religion from. Have I not conveyed the message? O Allaah! Bear witness.

Splinters of Gold with Regard to the Manners of Seeking Knowledge

This is a poem that is cane of the best of the poems that I have seen quoting the manners of learning and the manners of acquiring knowledge. I saw that I should quote it here due to its beauty and due to the benefits I hoped would come about through it for the one who reads my book and hoping that Allaah would benefit myself and him through it:

"Know that knowledge comes about through learning, through memorisation, precision and understanding. Knowledge may be granted to a young person and an old person may be prevented from it.

For indeed a person is according to two small parts of the body (i.e., his heart and his tongue) and not according to his legs and his arms-rather his tongue, and his heart that is built into his chest. That is an amazing part of creation. So knowledge comes about through understanding and revising and lessons, and through reflecting and through discussing.

So it may be the case that a person attains great memorisation and he can quote the text and repeat the wording but in anything else he has no share of that which the well versed scholar comprehends.

It may be the case that a person has great eagerness and love for knowledge, and for memorisation, but his heart is dull-witted and he is unable to memorise and narrate. He has no way to quote that which is narrated, whereas another person is granted without effort memorisation of that which occurs in the chain of narration. It agitates his heart without troubling his eyes and he

⁹⁹ [Ibn al-Mubarak said that '... **the small ones** ...' (**al-Asaaghir**) means the people of innovation, see' As-Saheehah no. 695. Trans. note]. Reported by 'Abdullaah ibn al-Mubaarak in Az-Zuhd (no.61), al-Laalikaa'ee in Sharh Usoolul-I'tiqaad Ahlis-Sunnah wal-Jamaa'ah (no.102) and al-Khateeb al-Baghdaadee in Jaami li-Akhlaaqir-Raawee wa Aadaabis-Saami' (1/137), by way of Ibn Lahee'ah, from Bakr ibn Sawaadah from: Aboo Umayyah al-Jumahee: from the Prophet (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam). I say: This is a saheeh chain of narration, since the narrations of Ibn Lahee'ah are authentic if one of the 'Abdullaah's narrate from him, and Ibn al-Mubaarak is one of them. Along with this is the fact that Ibn Lahee'ah is not alone in reporting it, rather Sa'eed ibn Abee Ayyoob supports his narration, reported by al-Khateeb al-Baghdaadee (1/137), and he is fully reliable and trustworthy. It also has a witness from the hadeeth of Ibn Mas'ood (radiyallaahu 'anhu) that has the ruling of having come from the Prophet (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) since it is something that cannot be said upon the basis of opinion and personal deduction. And its wording is, **"The people will continue upon good as long as the knowledge comes to them from the Companions of Muhammad and their greater folk. But when the knowledge comes to them from their smaller ones, then that is when they will be destroyed."** Reported by Ibn al-Mubaraak (no. 851), al-Laalikaa'ee (no. 101) and others).

has no need of stores of books. So seek the knowledge and seek it in a good manner and knowledge will not come about except through manners.

The beneficial manners are fine behaviour, and in too much speech there is hatred. So for as long as you live try to attain good manners, you will be praiseworthy for as long as you remain. And if a question appears amongst the people, something well-known from knowledge or something newly raised up, then don't be the first person to give an answer to it, until you have seen that somebody before you has spoken about that.

Because how many examples there have been before us of people in haste who speak without understanding and who speak erroneously, and this has earned them ridicule in the gatherings with the people of understanding and those who strive. Silence is truly a better adornment for you if you do not have certain knowledge. And if you are uncertain about a matter about which you are asked, then say, 'For that which you ask about I do not have any narration.' So this is half of knowledge with the scholars, the wise people have not ceased saying this.

And beware of being pleased and amazed with the excellence of your own opinion. And beware of giving an answer to something which will be a mistake. How many answers have been followed by regret, so seek the benefit of silence and being safe, for knowledge is an ocean, the limit of it is very far away, it has no end point that you can seek to reach and you have not gathered all of the knowledge, certainly not, not even a tenth of it even if you collected all that you had. That which remains for you is far more than that which you know, and even the fastest horse sometimes stumbles.

And if you hear something that you do not understand then ask for its meaning. The saying is two sayings, a saying which you will understand, and a saying which you will not understand. Every saying will have an answer covering that which is false and that which is true. For speech there is a beginning and an end so understand the both of them and let your mind be attentive.

Do not hasten to speak and do not hasten to return it until it leads you to that which follows on from it. It may be the case that the people of virtue are rendered unable to give an answer to questions they are asked, and therefore withhold with silence from answering when doubt comes to them regarding the answer. And even if a saying is counted by the common people to be like pure silver, then silence is from the purest gold.

So understand this, may Allaah guide you to the manners of seeking knowledge."¹⁰⁰

¹⁰⁰ Jaami' Bayaanil-Ilm wa Fadlihi, (1/146-148) adapted slightly.

CONCLUSION

May Allaah grant us the best conclusion and grant us more besides. This is what I have been able to gather together in this short time and I ask Allaah that he conveys it to those people whom it befits and those who know its value, and who hasten to accept it and who call for it to become widespread.

And I know that this topic needs further elaboration, further breaking down, further joining, precision and exactness. However it is just an indication for those people who have been struck with inability to distinguish and thus have become mouthpieces for the claims of the deviant sects and for the beguiling and erroneous calls. Those who think that they are upon something but they are not upon anything at all, and the person who does not have something cannot give anything, even if a person may feel satisfied with something which he has not been given and may make claims to have that which he does not possess.

There is not space here in this conclusion except to repeat what Ibn 'Abdul-Barr said in his valuable book, *Jaami' Bayaanil-'Ilm wa Fadlihi* on page 6, "And I love that the one guided to it should examine it. And if the scholars had left aside gathering the reports and checking out the narrations, and had left the proof for every type of affair just as a chapter in a book and had left every type of knowledge just as a section of a book, then wisdom would have been nullified and knowledge would have been lost and passed away.

And even though a large part of the knowledge has passed away because due attention was not given, due to little care, due to pre-occupation with the worldly life and due to rushing for the worldly life-yet still, even so, Allaah causes His Religion to remain through a people even if they are few: those who protect the fundamentals for this ummah and who distinguish and check its details. This is a bounty and a blessing from Allaah.

The people will always remain upon good as long as the first person lives long enough to teach the next one-because the passing away of knowledge comes about through the passing away of the scholars."

*How Perfect You are O Allaah and free from all defects
All praise is due to You
I testify that none has the right to be worshipped but You
I seek Your forgiveness and turn repentantly to You*